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AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH

SOCCER WEEKLY

VOL 18 No. 850 — TUESDAY NOVEMBER 4, 1997 • REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST — PUBLICATION No NBQ5726 $2.50

11/97 $2.50
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TRIMBOLI'S TRIPLE TON — Not Out

Last Saturday night at the Marconi Stadium PAUL TRIMBOLI, the South Melbourne captain and Socceroo squad player, played his 300th game in the National Soccer League.

At just 28 the Melbourne based accountant is now steaming ahead to break Sergio Melta's all-time record in any code of Australian football.

The ever smiling 'Trimmers', despite not scoring himself, characteristically celebrated the night by 'engineering' both of Souths' goals in a nail-biting 2-2 draw against Marconi.

Immediately after the match 'Trimmers' jogged across to his supporters where he was eagerly greeted by loyal Lakers fans.

The Souths supporters had made a special pilgrimage to salute their beloved hero.

As Trimboli approached his worshippers, they unveiled a huge blue banner emblazoned with the words: 'Paul Trimboli — 300 Game Magician'.

(See story Page 3).

Editorial

We're not there yet

On behalf of the staff of ABSW may I take this opportunity to thank you for your kind words and comments over the last couple of weeks. They have been appreciated but we all know that the job has only just begun and there is no place for 'resting on laurels'.

One or two minor grumbles have surfaced , which is really a case of pulling a favourite old chestnut out of the fire.

Not enough coverage of state youth leagues and results/tables allied to a lack of news concerning venues and kick-off times of NSL and state matches.

As ever, the answer is simple - we don't receive a great deal of information, first and foremost, on state league affairs and much of what we do receive is way past our deadline. If the governing bodies were to send us the said data (and we do have an E Mail address displayed below) to us at a reasonable hour, I am sure this service could improve but until such time as it does...

As for NSL games, the clubs are run as businesses these days and they must get 'their house in order' if great advances are to be made with regards to increased gates and associated revenue. Marconi advertise their home matches but how often do you see other NSL clubs doing the same?

If you don't advertise your wares, who is to know what it is you are selling and where?

Lastly; much as it would be wonderful to have a weekly publication devoted purely to Australian Soccer, think back on how many there have been, how many have tried and then ask, "where are they now?"

Simply put, if anyone out there has 50,000 mates who would regularly purchase a weekly magazine of purely Australian soccer, let them subscribe to ABSW and we will provide it!

Sadly, even after all this time, Soccer in this country is still at the fledgling stage. However, once Australia qualify for the World Cup Finals, every man and his dog will have been following the game for years; TV, radio and print media pundits will emerge and spout "facts" on our sport which will usually be inaccurate, inane and more worryingly perhaps, they won't even care.

ABSW will strive to give correct and factual information while improving its standards but we are limited to the extent that we cannot publish what we do not have.

Suggestions are always welcome...

Our new Email Address is:— soccer@foreignlanguage.com.au

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AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

7-9 Garners Ave., Marrickville NSW 2204. Tel (02) 9562-0500. Fax (02) 9550-9332 Email: soccer@foreignlanguage.com.au

Published every Tuesday by FLP Pty Ltd. 7-9 Garners Ave Marrickville NSW 2204

DISTRIBUTION

NSW/ACT: FLP Pty Ltd. 7 Garners Ave Marrickville NSW 2204. Tel: (02) 9562- 0500

VICTORIA: FLP Pty Ltd. Unit 9, 405 Flemington Road, North Melbourne, VIC 3051. Tel: (03) 9329-1636 Fax: (03) 9329-1342

QUEENSLAND: Queensland Newspaper Campbell St, Bowen Hills Qld. 4006 Tel: (07) 3252-6011

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Advertiser Newspaper Ltd. Waymouth St, Adelaide SA 5000 Tel: (08) 8218-9329

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Pan Hellenic Emporium, 67 James Street, Perth WA 6000. Tel: (08) 9328-4779

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GOOD OIL...GOOD OIL...

By John Economos

Just when all the experts had already worked out (the United Arab Emirates) just who our Asian opponent will be in our final World Cup qualifying hurdle, surprise surprise.

'Good Oil', as previously disclosed in past editions, also had a dip.

This column suspiciously favoured that Saudi Arabia would on November 16th surface as our eventual final opponent.

Early last week Saudi Arabia was well on course, looming as the definite threat by slotting into 2nd place right behind Group A leaders, the deadly Iranians, who are still highly favoured to win Group A.

But Soccer being what it is,, has yet again sprung a surprise, if not a shock. That shock could ultimately prove more meaningful to Australia.

Over the weekend, Iran was held to a shattering 0-0 draw by, of all nations, the lowly placed Group A side, Kuwait.

So what? This is what.

Despite Iran still leading Group A, Saudi Arabia who are still in second spot, two points behind the Iranians, have played ONE GAME LESS, and now seriously threaten to leapfrog Iran into the lead, relegating the deadly Iranians into second spot.

The Saudis on Thursday take on China while Iran on Friday face Qatar for their final match.

But Saudi Arabia tomorrow week, (Nov 12), has a game in hand, against Qatar.

Now one has to (including Terry Venables) seriously contemplate the Saudis can still win Group A, leaving Australia with the unenviable task of having to face second placed Iran in the first leg (Nov 22) in, of all places, the dreaded Tehran.

Right now 'Good Oil' feels that Australia's World Cup captain, the phlegmatic Alex Tobin, will NOT relish the thought of having to tag his luggage: Destination TEHRAN.

◆ ◆ ◆

PAUL TRIMBOLI, Australia's intelligent and skilled player, and South Melbourne's long-serving (nine years) skipper, distinguished himself last Saturday night by reaching the milestone of having played no less than 300 games in the National Soccer League in Souths' away 2-2 draw against Marconi.

The ever smiling and consistently placid 'Trimmers' at the end of the match, although totally exhausted, spent no less than an extra half an hour on the fence meeting, shaking hands and chatting to his ever faithful band of loyal Souths supporters who had journeyed up from Melbourne for the game, as well as to pay tribute to their favourite.

◆ ◆ ◆

GIUSEPPE MARINO, Marconi's former Inter Milan star, after last Saturday night having to track Trimboli all over the Marconi pitch endeavouring to neutralise his genius, stated to 'Good Oil': "Trimboli is a wonderful player. His skills and vision are exceptional and is constantly trying to do something for his team, even when he is not in possession."

PETER HENSMAN the former St George, Sydney Olympic and St George block-busting goalscorer of the 70s and 80s, and the man who is bringing former Man Utd captain Norman Whiteside to Australia, released to 'Good Oil' the six dates and venues where Big Norman can be seen and heard speaking.

Whiteside, as all Man Utd supporters know, was the player to break Brazil's living legend Pele's record of being the youngest player to ever compete in World Cup Finals.

The now 34 year old Norman, was just 17 years and 41 days old when he played in Spain in 1982 for Northern Ireland

His dates are: November 27 at the North Melbourne Football Club, November 28 at the Richmond Soccer Club, December 1 in Adelaide at the Plympton Sports and Recreation Club, December 2 in Brisbane at the Rochedale Rovers Soccer Club, December 4 & 5 in Sydney at the North Sydney Leagues Club and Blacktown City Soccer Club respectively.

◆ ◆ ◆

UTS OLYMPIC this Sunday morning will hold a most crucial extraordinary meeting to decide on the Club's destiny. The Club members will assemble to consider and vote upon four 'privatisation-proposals' that have been put forward to them.

The first proposal was lodged weeks ago by flamboyant former stockbroker Rene Rivkin, which basically was for a $2 million takeover offer for 100% of the entire Club.

The cigar chomping Rivkin is currently cash rich after having recently sold his 'cut-price' stockbroking firm for a reported $24 million.

The giant Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club headed up by the wealthy Ford Dealer owner, President Nick Politis, has ventured forward a proposal involving some $1.3 million for 51% ownership plus some added pieces such as $100,000 per year sponsorship monies.

Offer three has come from the Canterbury Bulldogs which extends $500,000 upfront cash for 51% ownership, plus a further $200,000 cash injection every year for the next three years.

The 4th and final proposal for the Olympic members to consider on Sun morning at the Club's social premises at Hurlstone Park, comes from private property developer Mr Matthew Lepouris, a strong Olympic supporter, who is offering $1million cash for 51% ownership plus some further encouraging bits and pieces.

The current Olympic board of management consortium has strongly recommended that the Club in some way must strongly consider one of the above proposals if it is to survive in the national Soccer League for years to come.

◆ ◆ ◆

SYDNEY TILL the end of the current Ericsson Cup season will be left with no less than 11 Sundays without a single match played within the City's limits.

Stretching over the next 21 Rounds, Sydney has just 11 League matches scheduled to be played on a Sunday.

This has been brought about because of the following:

Marconi traditionally plays its home games on a Saturday.

Sydney United this season, has elected to switch from Sundays and play their home matches on a Friday night at their new 'home-ground' the Parramatta Stadium.

Market research, demographics theoretically worked out during the off-season, has led Sydney United to make this switch.

Only UTS Olympic, to date, has refused to budge from their traditional Match Day, that being on a Sunday.

◆ ◆ ◆

DAVID MITCHELL, Sydney United's 35 year old heroic player-coach, has a deep seated secret desire burning inside him almost 24 hours a day since returning back from Europe to play in the Ericsson Cup.

'Big Mitch' is driving himself into the ground, totally obsessed with the burning ambition of still making a belated bid to climb into Terry Venables' World Cup squad for the coming two legs against our Asian opponent later this month.

Since making his debut in the 'Green and Gold' for Australia back in October 1981 at the World Youth Championships hosted in this country, 'Big Mitch' has jealously treasured every single Australia shirt that has been handed to him by our national selectors.

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TRIMBOLI THE TERRIFIC

ABSW Salutes Paul

By John Economos

Paul Trimboli, arguably Australia's most intelligent player in the National Soccer League for the past 10 years, has never ceased to amaze the Soccer public with his deft silky skills and razor sharp peripheral vision.

The Soccer public has come to expect goals galore from the ace-scorer. But that's not his whole armoury. Far from it.

In fact Trimboli has engineered far more goals for his team-mates than he has actually scored himself. For example, one only has to look back to the Trans-Tasman Cup played at Newcastle when Australia clashed with New Zealand three years ago.

The then national coach Eddie Thomson selected him to fill the role of 'linkman'.

Sitting just behind the twin-strikers Trimboli that day destroyed the Kiwis, leaving the New Zealand defenders behind him before firing lethal sharp through balls to set up all of Australia's three goals.

Last Saturday night at the Marconi Stadium 'Trimmers' racked up his monumental 300th game in the National League.

In his characteristically and still boyish manner, the little goal-scoring Soccer genius stated to ABSW: "Gee how time has flown. I still remember ten years ago when I first came into the NSL. I made my debut in the League at the age of 18 with Sunshine in a match against, would you believe, South Melbourne. We got walloped 3-0 that day. Paul Wade knocked in two of them.

"I can't believe how those years have all gone by so quickly. Gee whiz," 'Trimmers' painfully laughed.

Having highly entertained, (not so in the case of opposing teams), he has never failed to give excellent value, both on, as well as off the pitch.

It's absolutely astonishing how no large marketing agency has not snapped up this model player and contracted him to do product promos. With almost perfect disposition, natural manners and good clean fresh looks, he projects that high quality image that large corporations today are screaming out for.

Over the years many clubs in the National League have endeavoured to entice 'little Trimmers' to join them.

All failed. All reported back to their committees ... 'Mission Impossible'.

Trimboli kicked off his senior Soccer career with former NSL club Sunshine George Cross before being snapped up by the giant Victorian club South Melbourne.

Today he still remains, (according to all South Melbourne supporters) that Club's 'heritage-protected' product.

In all those years of playing in the NSL which match stood out most for Trimboli?

"Without doubt the 1991 Grand Final against Melbourne Knights. We were losing 1-0 and time was running out, yet we ended up equalising in stoppage time and went on to win on a penalty shoot out," he fondly reminisced.

In typical fashion, the wonderfully unassuming Trimboli failed to state to ABSW just why and how Souths were able to 'get out of jail' in that incredible 1991 Grand Final at Melbourne's Olympic Park.

But like most of Australia's Soccer public we at **ABSW** remember.

With South's gum-chewing coach, the former Hungarian international Ferenc Puskas sitting motionless and stunned on the bench, facing almost certain defeat with seconds left from fulltime, Puskas like most, had totally forgotten one Paul Trimboli who had been shackled by the Knights' powerful defenders.

Just when all seemed lost, little 'Trimmers' had silently dropped deeply back into Souths' box.

Latching onto the ball and with radar-vision, he exploded a long ball out of his box and over the top to the halfway mark where he was able to hit his striker Joe Palatsidis. With no one in front of him Palatsidis streaked away to score the equaliser and send the match hurtling into a penalty shoot out, ultimately won by Trimboli's beloved South Melbourne.

Two years prior in Australia's World Cup qualifier against Israel played at the Sydney Football Stadium, national coach Frank Arok was desperate. Time was running out and Australia was trailing 0-1.

Arok sent on Trimboli with seven minutes left and within two minutes of coming on he stunned Israel when he scored with his first touch of the ball to equalise.

Paul Trimboli, the C.P.A. accountant, you're a credit plus a wonderful asset to Australian Soccer.

Congratulations, ABSW salutes you.

Thanks for the memories with hopefully heaps and heaps more to come.

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AROUND THE CLUBS

BROTHERLY LOVE

By Dane Skafte

When talking about the Halpin brothers Troy and Scott, one immediately thinks soccer. Both players have been very close for the majority of their playing days and have a great respect for each other.

However, this 'fraternal admiration society' was put aside last Friday night when older brother Scott, currently with Perth Glory, and younger brother Troy, of Newcastle Breakers, came head-to-head at Topper Stadium.

Scott joined the Glory recently after a highly successful season in Western Australia state competition. Needless to say, speculation that Troy will head across to Perth next year after his contract concludes at the end of the season and join his brother is doing the rounds.

Glory's coach Gary Marocchi kept a close eye on the younger Halpin while in Newcastle last week.

The Glory 'supercoach' stated that Newcastle refused Perth's request to speak to the rising star because he is still under contract with the club.

◆ ◆ ◆

MICKY WILLIAMS MAKES DEBUT

TALENTED WINGER and new boy Micky Williams made his starting debut against Perth Glory last Friday night after midfielder Doug West was dropped to the bench.

West captained the Breakers youth side last season and is yet to come to terms with the higher level.

◆ ◆ ◆

NNSW COACHING

NNSW SOCCER Federation's Director of Coaching, Ken Kaiser, conducted a Level 2 coaching course last weekend in Coffs Harbour. Kaiser had 27 coaches from the Port Macquarie, Nambucca Heads, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour areas under his tutelage.

NNSW Development Officer Bruce Tracey assisted with the coaching which was conducted at the Coffs Harbour Showground. Coaches obtaining their Level Two accreditation are eligible to coach at state league and state representative level.

According to Kaiser, players of the calibre of Adam Israel and Adam Sharpe, both of Holiday Coast soccer, have done well in the Under 16 NNSW team, and this can be attributed to "the coaches of the area obtaining their coaching levels," he concluded.

Gary Marocchi: Keeping an eye on Troy Halpin.

Farina calls for neutral referees

By Glenn Davis

Brisbane Strikers player/coach Frank Farina has again appealed to authorities for neutral referees.

Farina was given his marching orders by Brisbane referee Mark Shield in the Strikers' 1-0 loss to Carlton at Suncorp Stadium on Saturday night.

He conceded Shield's performance had no bearing on the result, but he and the Strikers' management revisited a similar scenario last season.

Shield came under fire last year when awarding a penalty in South Melbourne's last minute win over the Strikers at Suncorp Stadium.

"I said it last year and I'll say it again that I don't believe Shield should get a home game in Brisbane," Farina said.

After the controversial South Melbourne game of last season, Farina said that Shield shouldn't be given games in Brisbane as both players and referee were under too much pressure.

Farina was non-committal as to whether he was treated harshly by the send-off. "I don't know. You could argue the first card but the second time I definitely went for the ball," he said.

"I don't think any Brisbane referee should get a Brisbane game and I would like to see the foul count. It would be about 60-10 against us."

The Queensland Soccer legend, hinting at a few surprise changes next week, believes the Strikers are lacking confidence, but he can feel the side is not far off finding their missing form.

"It's nowhere near what we wanted as a start," he said, "We're not doing it with the squad I thought so I might make a few changes next week.

"I'll put in some players that might be, to some, a surprise selection. Sixth spot is still really the goal and things will turn around but we have to keep in touch," he concluded.

Frank Farina: "I don't think any Brisbane referee should get a Brisbane game."

ASIAN PLAY-OFF

SBS TV have announced they will be showing both of the fourth placed Asian qualifying games 'live' (except Melbourne).

The first game takes place on November 22 but to date, times are yet to be confirmed.

The return match on November 29 will be screened throughout Australia (except Melbourne) at the following times:

Perth: 5pm - 7.45pm
Darwin: 6.30pm - 9.15pm
Qld: 7pm - 9.45pm
Vic Country, NSW, ACT, SA and Tasmania: 7.45pm - 10.45pm

Later in the evening a full replay of the game has been scheduled for Melbourne 'only' at 11.30pm until 1.30am.

For those unfortunate enough not to be at the MCG, at least some solace can be found in SBS' continued excellence in coverage of the domestic scene.

Surely the likes of Zelic, Vidmar, Bosnich, Okon, Foster, Slater and company — if selected – will be heartened by the thought that the whole of Australia will be watching and urging them on to victory and the ultimate prize — the World Cup Finals.

Vale ... ERNIE LAMB

Well known soccer identity Ernie Lamb died recently after a short illness at the age of 56. Lamb was an official of Newcastle Rosebuds which took over KB United in 1984.

I had the pleasure of knowing Ernie for the past five years. The 'gentle giant', as he was known to his friends, was awarded life membership after 15 years of service to the Lambton Jaffas Club.

He was well known throughout the Newcastle region for his involvement as a soccer administrator, a golf club official and A-Grade cricketer.

He is survived by his wife Sherry, three daughters, Donna, Tracey and Jo-Ann and four grandchildren.

ABSW would like to add their sincere condolences to his family and friends. RIP.

CONSORTIUM TAKE OVER WOLVES

Euro players, funds injection imminent

By Phil Murphy

Wollongong Wolves are talking to players in Scotland and Germany after last week's takeover by a consortium of local businessmen.

During an extraordinary general meeting at the Fraternity Bowling Club, members voted unanimously to allow the group to take over the club.

Formed in 1981, the Wolves will be operated by Wollongong Epic Events. Spokesperson for the group, developer Joe Cachia (a Wolves foundation member) told **ABSW** each member had provided $50,000 and there were 18 definite starters.

"We hope to have at least 20 when the legalities are completed in three weeks," he said.

"This was the only way the Wolves could continue as a viable proposition in the national league. They are losing money each year and there is no future in the present set-up."

He added that there were consortium members who would take shares in single memberships.

Cacchia also pointed out that the consortium had retained the present board of direction.

"There is no set period for this but we need to get to know the ropes. I believe we should take advantage of their expertise. We have to look at the position of general manager and other office staff."

Club chairman, Brian Hastings, said before the vote was taken that there were two important reasons why members had to support the consortium.

It was a make or break situation financially, and the club had been under-capitalised from day one.

"Consortium members would provide business acumen, business reputation and have the best interests of the club at heart," he noted.

"The second reason is that Soccer Australia demands that clubs operate to a certain criteria. These include clubs becoming fully professional and having assets of $2 million and seating for at least 10,000 at the home ground."

The only previous chairman of the club, Laurie Kelly, addressed members on the need to change.

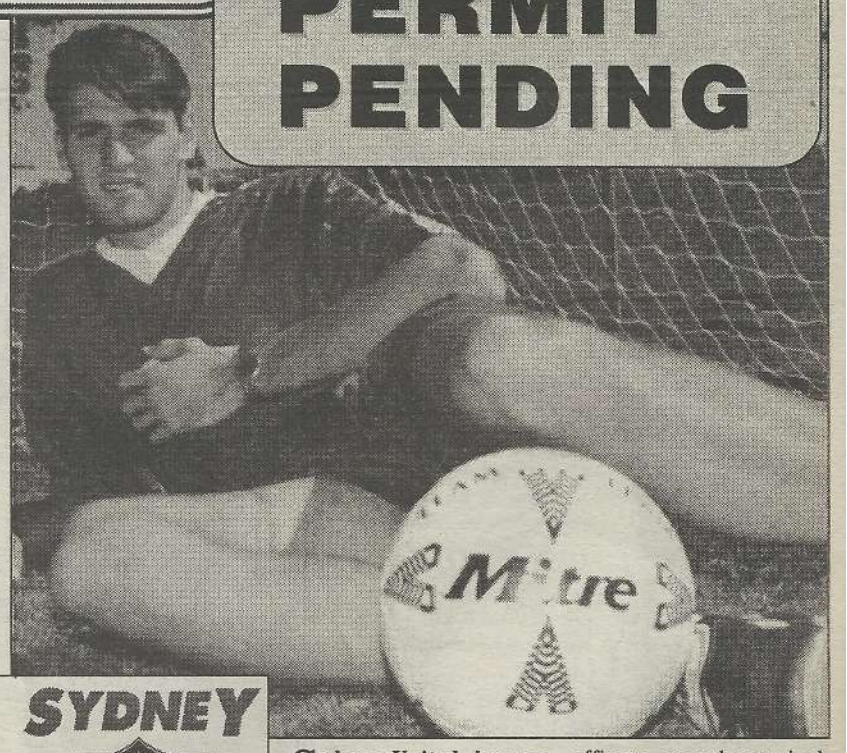
Lord Mayor of Wollongong, David Campbell, who is a director of the club, and former director Alan Walton, also spoke in support of the consortium.

Apart from injecting money into the club, the consortium members have wide and varied backgrounds and can take on a number of projects.

They are adamant they want Wollongong Wolves to become one of the top clubs in the national league. Top quality players will be signed but Hastings said every effort would be made to encourage local players, and he added that Wolves junior nursery will remain strong.

Cachia had already greatly helped on a personal level to assist them by providing $70,000 in cash and equipment to develop the two outer grounds at Brandon Park, which are currently being used by the juniors and women's team.

PERMIT PENDING



Sydney United keeper Zeljko Kalac has been awaiting a work permit for the UK so that he may join First Division side Portsmouth.

This week he did get some good news when hearing the British High Court are reviewing the case with a view to advising the home office to grant the required documents.

'Spider' Kalac has been back in Australia and playing with former club Sydney United in an attempt to remain match fit as this lengthy process drags on.

Zeljko Kalac: Awaiting news of permit.

AROUND THE CLUBS

Victorian UPDATE

By Dwyght Tuffnell

SOUTH MELBOURNE

• Lakers' skipper Paul Trimboli passed the 300 game mark over the weekend in South's game against Marconi.

Only current NSL players Alex Tobin, Alan Hunter, Rod Brown, Alan Davidson and Jean-Paul De Marigny have played more games than Socceroo 'Trimmers'.

At 28, Trimboli is likely to push the record of 445 set by Adelaide City's Sergio Melta.

• With warmer weather coming on South have switched three of their home games to Friday nights. This week's game against Adelaide Sharks has been moved to an 8pm kick-off on Friday night.

The two other switches are the Round nine clash with Wollongong City and Brisbane Strikers in Round 15.

• The Lakers farewelled Mike Petersen in grand style before the UTS Olympic home game.

Petersen, who retired at the start of the season after knee injuries became too much, was given a big send off by the home crowd.

He walked a lap of the ground to a standing ovation and fought back tears as they continued applauding as he took his seat on the Lakers bench where he is an assistant to coach Angie Postecoglou.

PAUL TRIMBOLI

RANSFORD BANINI

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

• African utility Ransford Banini returned to the fray against Sydney United after missing the trip to Perth. He sent a scare through the Knights camp with a bout of chicken pox.

He was requested to stay away from the club, but has since made a speedy recovery.

• Knights General Manager, Sebastian Italia, is hoping to instil an atmosphere not dissimilar to that of Perth Glory's for the home games at Knights Stadium.

Extremely impressed by what he saw in Perth, Italia said the club plans to have a spruiker at the games to get a 'Go Knights Go' chant going in a bid to get the crowd fully behind the team.

• The Knights new social club, being built underneath the new stand, should be just about ready by Christmas time.

It is the second social club on the site and is open to everyone, whereas the existing club is a separate entity to the soccer club.

Continued...

Adelaide UPDATE

By Val Migliaccio

BRAZIL'S OLIVEIRA CLEARED TO SHARKS

ADELAIDE SHARKS received some good news concerning their second Brazilian import, Pedro Paolo Oliveira. He has received his international clearance and is all set to play for the Sharks. Coach Adrian Santrac stated: "Timing is the key, I don't want to rush Oliviera in, we'll have to wait and see if he can slot into defence or midfield."

WOUNDED SHARKS BACK ON TRACK

SHARKS DEFENDER Jamie Perin has recommenced training after a four week lay-off because of ankle problems, with captain Con Kokkinoplitis set to resume light training next week after suffering a depressed fracture of the cheekbone.

Richie Alagich has started swimming after his cartilage operation and Bill Misailidis is set to return after a groin injury.

HASSELL ALL CLEAR

ADELAIDE CITY'S midfield/striker Brad Hassell has got the 'all clear' from his specialist to resume playing for the Zebras after breaking his arm twice. Hassell, one of the Zebras' personalities, will be glad to get back in the side and resume his goalscoring relationship with Damian Mori.

In the 1995/96 season, before Mori left for Germany, the combination scored 43 goals, more than half of the Zebras' total of 63. Mori scored 31 (an Australian record), and Hassell 12.

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ring the Club
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PERTH DUO PUT FAITH IN GLORY

By Richard Kreider

Bobby Despotovski and Scott Miller have shown their allegiance by signing lucrative contracts keeping them with the club until the year 2000.

The national league trailblazers now have eleven full-time players on their books, which is arguably the most ever at any one club throughout the 21 year history of the national competition.

The other Glory full-timers are Vinko Buljubasic, Tommy Maras, Socceroo Ernie Tapai, New Zealand internationals Danny Hay and Gavin Wilkinson, youth internationals Michael Garcia and Tony Carbone, youngster Jamie Afkos and new import, Nigerian international Samson Siasia.

WA TO VISIT MALAYSIA

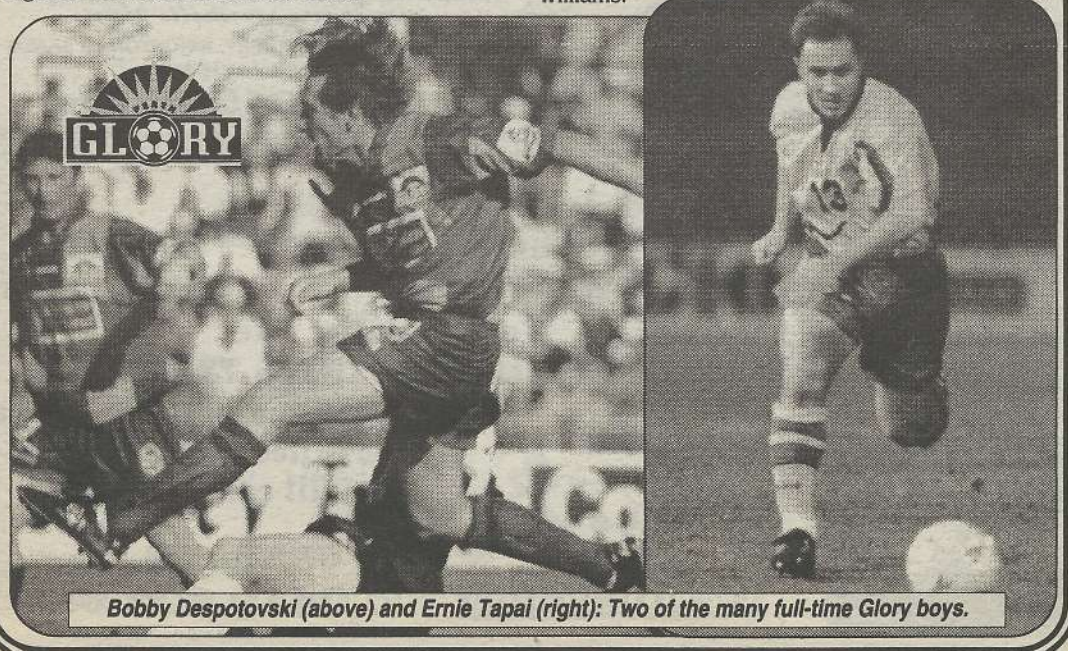
The West Australian State team will be visiting Malaysia for two games in November.

They will first take on Malaysian League champions Sarawak on November 11 followed by a Kuching select side two days later.

Perth Glory have allowed only one player to travel with the party, Doug Ithier, who made his state debut against the Singapore Lions last month.

He will, however, be required to stay should the Ericsson Cup side have any problems with their other defenders.

Robert Puca of the Perth Soccer Club, Floreat Athena's Troy Bernard and Stirling's former Socceroo goalkeeper Phil Trianedes are the only newcomers to the WA 14 man squad under coach Williams.



Bobby Despotovski (above) and Ernie Tapai (right): Two of the many full-time Glory boys.

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3-0	26.00	3-3	51.00	0-3	26.00	D-H	5.50
3-1	23.00			1-3	23.00	D-D	4.50
3-2	26.00			2-3	26.00	D-A	5.50
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Australia 2010?

Dear Sir,

With the Olympics a mere three years away, it is time for those with influence to decide what sport events Australia can host early next century.

Jeff Kennett's attempts to bring every worthwhile event to Melbourne should raise the question to those in Soccer: what is our agenda for early next century?

Can we get the World Cup to come to Australia? Given the cost of mounting a bid is it worthwhile?

I believe the rewards for such a tournament certainly would be there for soccer and the economy. We can host the Cup, and the Sydney Olympics are the key.

The momentum for a bid can only come through the spirit of 2000 when patriotism, national euphoria and pride from being games host can be used as the springboard for announcing a bid for 2010 World Cup.

It seems a requirement for a bid is between 8-16 all-seater stadia with minimum 35,000 seat capacity. Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne will by 2000 meet these requirements with the SFS, Sydney's Olympic stadium, a renovated Bruce Stadium and the Dockland Stadium in Melbourne (with its contractible seating).

Brisbane has the potential at the renovated ANZ Stadium, Lang Park, Adelaide is half there by renovating Hindmarsh Stadium to 20,000 seats while the WA governments seems committed to building a quality stadium for Perth Glory.

Jeff Kennett once wanted to host the World Cup in Victoria alone so getting funding for a new stadium in Geelong and catering for its AFL side and soccer would seem a formality.

Officials in Newcastle and Wollongong would press for the all-seater stadiums in their areas as they areas have been longing for this sort of investment that cost them the chance to host the Olympics.

Townsville has the excellent Stockland stadium which already holds 35, 000. With the Cup's ability to attract tourists, cities such as Hobart, Gold Coast and even Darwin might receive Government funding for a bid.

For a World Cup bid to succeed not only does it need the support of Soccer Australia but from the majority of Australians from the PM, state premiers, councils, Oceanian officials, state federations, stadium officials and even rival codes.

It will take a person with optimism and vision to achieve all these. For this reason I urge David Hill to seize the chance and do the Aussie thing and 'have a go'.

S. Brian
Earlwood, NSW

NINE WON'T WORK

Dear Sir,

I am writing in reference to your article in a recent copy of ABSW, describing the changes made to the Queensland Soccer Federation's 1998 competition. Your piece ends with the paragraph: 'In essence, what is happening to football in Queensland is the ushering in of a new era. Anything that creates more interest and larger leagues in Australian Soccer must be applauded'.

Admittedly a competition involving clubs from the Gold Coast and Bundaberg should create more interest, but as for making them larger, I am afraid I must disagree.

Last season the Premier League was cut from twelve to eight clubs, and it took an almighty effort by Gold Coast and Mount Gravatt to get accepted this time. As for the semi-pro debacle ...

For the 1997 semi-professional competition, ten teams apiece were invited to take part, and when one dropped out of the southern conference the competition went ahead with nine teams. This meant that each club had only eight home games during the season, and two byes.

Eight home games is hardly the type of forward thinking that allows semi-professional clubs to keep their financial heads afloat. Players want to play more games, fans want to see more football, and board members need the clubs to be open to generate revenue through bar takings, gate money and other fund raising activities.

Last season, every southern club complained that the nine team structure was simply not acceptable. So what do the QSF do this season? Invite nine teams into both semi-pro competitions!

Changes are happening up here, but only at he insistence of one or two clubs in Brisbane, and a large number of country affiliates are sick to the back teeth of seeing promises broken by people who have been in charge for too long.

Tony Moran
Bulimba, QLD

Editor's Note: Without the voice of those who attend the localised scene, we can only go on what is reported to us. If this proves to be a misrepresentation, you have the opportunity to do exactly what you have done ...

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Letters to the Editor

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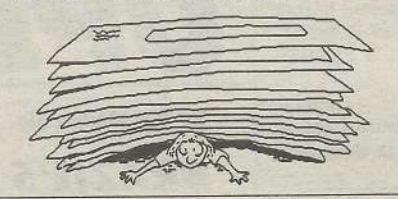

The Editor,
AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY
PO BOX 155,
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NSW 2204
Fax: (02) 9550-9332

Short letters of about 400 words will be given preference in this column.

The opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect those of this newspaper

TINA and ARKO for SOCCER!

Dear Sir,

Last week I read both the Telegraph and the Herald and was shocked to find that there was no advertisement for the weekend's round of matches in the Ericsson Cup. I know SA (Soccer Australia) has no money but surely this minimum type of publicity is expected. You could be forgiven for thinking that the competition was in recess apart from an article here and there.

Now if SA had someone like Ken Arthurson, former ARL Chairman, at the helm, my experiences today would never happen.

Imagine Tina Turner singing the soccer song or anthem. We don't even have a song let alone a celebrity to sing it.

Arko would surely have soccer bristling with all the pomp and pageantry that would attract a wider interest.

David Hill may have resurrected ailing organisations to a point of self sufficiency but he has not taken them to the next level. Arko or another rugby league aficionado is the last and final solution to the terminal illness in Australian sport that is soccer.

Rod Feher
Woollahra, NSW

BETTER QUALIFICATION PATH NEEDED

Dear Sir,

People have talked about how easy Australia's qualification path is in relation to all other countries. Although the final hurdle will be difficult, it seems ridiculous that we only play a total of eight matches, as opposed to 16 like some other countries.

Of course four of those were always going to be Australian wins, and it could be argued that New Zealand weren't much opposition. That makes a total of two tough matches.

Some have suggested we join the Asian Confederation, but this is probably too late now. What I suggest is that we should continue to qualify via Asia (like in this campaign), but join the Asian nations at an earlier stage. The Asians have been split into two groups for the second round (currently being contested), and there is no reason why Australia should not be a part of this.

The Oceania champion should join eleven Asian nations, divided into two groups of six, with each country playing each other on a home-and-away basis, for a total of ten games each. The first and second team in each group qualify directly. Therefore, Australia (presuming they win the Oceania Group), would play 16 matches, which is exactly what we need given FIFA rankings discriminate against us (we should be in the top twenty!).

There are many advantages with this situation. Obviously we would play more quality matches, resulting in a better Australian team. With FIFA proposing to standardise international days, this means we would be able to field our strongest team, without clubs like Croatia Zagreb for example placing undue pressure on our players.

The chance to play five home matches would result in more revenue for Soccer Australia, more sponsorship, and more media exposure for our national team. The five matches could be spread among the capital cities, with the earlier Oceania matches being played in smaller centres such as Newcastle, Wollongong and Canberra, so everyone can watch the boys in action. This would make the Socceroos our only true national sporting team.

I know the Asians would be opposed to this, but what difference would it make? Absolutely none, since we will be playing the fourth best team in this campaign anyway, and the final result will be the same, with three Asian teams qualifying for sure, possibly four with Australia.

Four years ago we were complaining about how difficult our qualification path was. There would not be a country in the world happy to play Argentina. We have gone from one extreme to another. Why can't FIFA give us something in between these two extremes.

Yours in Football
G. Owen.

Me & You & the Socceroos

(to the tune of 'Me and You and a Dog Named Boo, by Lobo)

I remember to this day
That Goal against S.K.,
How Jimmy MacKay's shot sailed
- to the back of the net.

Well on November 29 we'll go
(for all real football fans that's so)
Oh how I wish we'd be back
for the best World Cup yet!

Chorus:
Me and you and the Socceroos
travellin' and singin' all we can
Green and Gold and the Socceroos
- how I love bein', a football fan

I can still recall
the last home game of all,
We packed the Sydney Sportsground
- as it was called then.
That first leg draw in '73,
then Mckay's goal in leg three,
Now another tank of fuel for we're
back on the road again

Chorus

I can't wait for the day
we motor stately down Melbourne way,
The lights of the city 'll shine out
- from the MCG

Though it's less than a month to go
for Terry and the team, we'll show,
we'll help make sure that in France
there'll be Australia!
Chorus , Chorus

Chris Kunz
Higgins, ACT

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Rising Stars

EXCEPTIONAL STANDARDS

One young girl who won many admirers during the finals series of the Bill Turner Topper Cup, played at Edgeworth Soccer Ground, was Katrina Staniforth from Kaleen High School in the ACT.

She showed ability beyond her years and gained points in the 'Star Player Awards'.

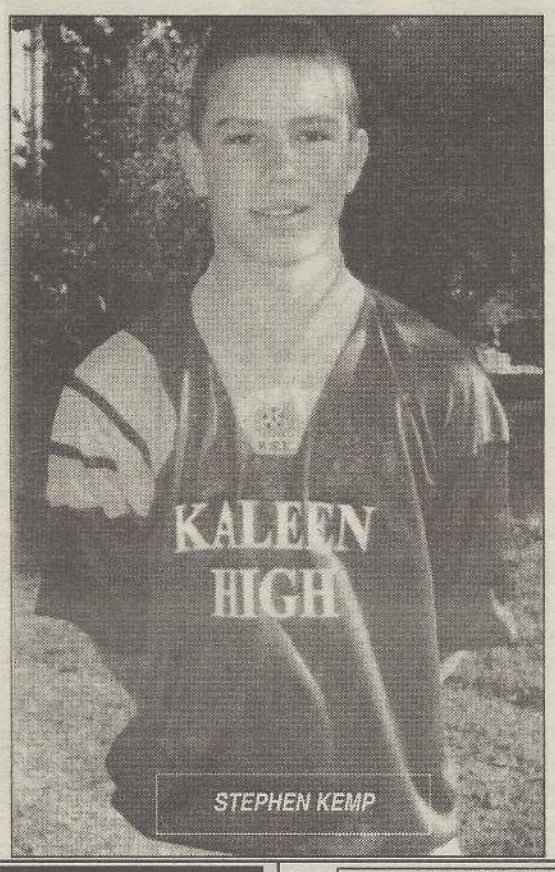
Katrina was certainly not out of place in the competition and follows in the footsteps of Lisa Casagrande (from Lismore), now an Australian international. On this showing Staniforth should have a very bright future in the game.

However the '1997 Bill Turner Topper Cup Star Player Award' was eventually won by Stephen Kemp, coincidently also from Kaleen High School.

Following on from this award, he went on to captain the ACT side which defeated Victoria in the U/15 National Championships; he then made the Joeys train-on squad.

Bill Turner was so impressed with the player that he took time to contact Branko Culina, coach of Ericsson Cup side Novell Canberra Cosmos, to express the high regard he holds for Stephen who, he feels, may become a star in the near future.

Well done to Bill Turner and all those involved in the Bill Turner Topper Cup. Keep up the good work.



STEPHEN KEMP

KATRINA STANIFORTH

Send Off Crashes Harnwell's Party

By Richard Kreider

For the first time in thirty years, West Australia's most prestigious 'Fairest and Best' Award has been shared between Spearwood Dalmatinac winger Paul Lincoln and Stirling Macedonia's seasoned stopper Andy Wright, who were locked together after 26 rounds of voting.

But Sorrento's rising star defender Jamie Harnwell will be lamenting over what could have been an outstanding 1997 season if he hadn't picked up a red card in Round 18 of the Soccer West Coast Premier League competition.

The tall, 20 year old polled the most points on the 'Casa Commerciale Fairest and Best Gold Medal' presentation at Novotel Langley, but was deemed ineligible because of the sending off he received in a July home fixture against Perth SC.

The season, however, wasn't all that bad for the centre back He collected the club's 'Fairest & Best Trophy', ahead of player-coach Trevor Morgan. Both were highly instrumental in the club reaching third place on the league standings, which is a far better achievement than the previous season when they finished third from bottom.

It must have been a nail biting time for Lincoln who top polled for three quarters of the season, but then failed to pick up any points in the last six rounds due to injury. To make his palms sweat even more, Wright and Harnwell made a late charge to join him on 17 points in Round 24, but it remained the same in the penultimate round. Harnwell then received cries of compassion from the large gathering after he picked up a maximum three votes in the final round, which eventually left the other two as dual-winners. They each received a gold medal worth $1,000 and a cheque for the same amount.

Mike Ireson of Olympic and Theo Paap (Windmills) were the last pair to share in the F & B Honour in 1967.

Meanwhile, Fremantle City's goalkeeper Chris Ball became the sixth recipient of the 'Goalkeeper of the Year' Award, and Nikola Mrdja (Bayswater Panthers), was the 'Rookie of the Year'.

Medals...

In what turned out to be a wonderful year for Kaleen High, here they are being awarded their medals by Mr Warren Oliver (Topper),

Left to right: Mark Shields, Dusko Culibrk, John Ratchford, Victor Villalon, Dean Bailie.

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ERICSSON CUP

Match Reports

'MITCH' SENT OFF IN FIERY BATTLE

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS .....0 SYDNEY UNITED 0

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Ten man Sydney United battled for a valuable point against Melbourne Knights at Knights Park on Sunday.

The spiteful encounter produced no goals or good football and will be remembered for United player/coach David Mitchell's send-off after 27 minutes.

The influential Mitchell was given his marching orders by referee Eugene Brazzale after a series of bizarre incidents.

Andrew Marth had been booked by the referee for not retreating ten yards when Mitchell had quickly taken a free kick. 'Mitch' and Marth then had some words and Alan Davidson became involved with the Sydney United striker. Very few people knew at the time what the visitors' player/coach was dismissed for, but the official line from the referee's room at half time was that it was for spitting at Davidson.

Mitchell would not speak to the media after the game but his assistant, Lawrie McKinna, said that he was very upset about the incident.

"He got a couple of knocks to the face and then he got sent off. No one saw it, as far as we are concerned how can the referee send somebody off if no one has seen the incident?"

McKinna said that Mitchell had spat out some blood after his lip had burst following a "couple of knocks to the face."

Davidson refused to make an issue of the incident after the game but did praise Brazzale for acting on it.

"The refs have got a hard enough job as it is but I'm glad he spotted it because you really don't want that in the game," he claimed.

Apart from that, very little happened in a game where it took 38 minutes to get a shot on target.

The Knights, though, missed a golden opportunity four minutes before half time. Marth found some room on the left hand side and swung over a cross for Ice Kutlesovski, who had plenty of power in his header, but a fantastic reflex save from Socceroo Zeljko Kalac kept the scores level.

Neither side looked like troubling the scoreboard attendants in the second half, with players reduced to shooting from long distance in the difficult windy conditions.

"We were put under the hammer being down to ten men so early but the boys defended well and the Knights only had a couple of chances. We were looking to come down here and get a victory because we've been playing well, but after having 'Mitch' sent-off so early, we're over the moon to get a result," concluded the Pumas assistant coach.

Knights coach Ken Worden said the wind had played a big factor and that United's defence were the difference.

"If a big team like this sit in, they're a hard team to break down. We made one or two half chances, but we really couldn't break them down to score," said a disappointed Worden.

David Mitchell: Too upset to speak to media after game.

Knights: Joe Didulica, Kovacevic, Jolic, Banini, Marth, Kutlesovski (Markovski 82), Pondeljak, Davidson, Kelic, John Didulica, Deak (Collina 71)

Pumas: Kalac, Bennett, Kupresak, Vrkic, Plesa, Munro, Hooker, Bilokapic, Burns (Phillips 75), Saad, Mitchell

Crowd: 4,000

P.O.Y.

3: John Didulica (MK)

2: Hooker (SU)

1: Banini (MK)

OLIVEIRA MAKES DEBUT AT HOME

ADELAIDE SHARKS .....1 GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0

By Val Migliaccio

A second half goal by Sharks substitute Nathan Day was enough to sink Gippsland Falcons last Sunday night at Thebarton Oval.

Day, rested in the first half because of a calf injury sustained in training, was brought into the match at the opening of the second period, at the expense of John Cutillo, and his commanding affect was felt in the home side's attack almost immediately.

The only strike of the game arrived after 52 minutes when Day pounced on a loose ball and curled it into the back of the net.

Brazilian import Pedro Oliveira made his Sharks debut, joining fellow countryman Bigu in the midfield, and played a major part in the home team's victory.

Falcons made two changes from last week's starting eleven that lost to Marconi. In came Manny Gotis and Joe Tricarico, the latter leaving the pitch injured after 34 minutes to be replaced by Nick Tsaltas.

The Falcons looked dangerous in the 22 minute when Palamaras sent over a perfect cross from the left for McNicol, who let loose a beautiful drive that forced Sharks keeper Frank Mikuletic into making a great fingertip save.

Eighteen minutes later and Oliveira had the opportunity to score on his debut when meeting an Alex Castro cross and, with the goal at his mercy, missed the target completely.

The 56 minute saw Jim Tsekenis, making his 100th appearance for West Adelaide/Adelaide Sharks, set off on a glorious run and he released Alex Kuzmanovic whose shot, from close range, was off target.

Three minutes later and Sharks midfielder Corey Artone could have sealed the match when firing a 25 metre thunderbolt that smashed into the upright.

The win keeps the Sharks run, in front of their own supporters, going this season. But their performance on the park wasn't as convincing as the 3-0 win over Cosmos the previous week.

Frank Arok, coach of the Falcons, felt that no team was better than his side so far this season, but was concerned that his strikers are letting the side down.

The game was played at a mediocre pace with Sharks creating few clear-cut chances. Falcons concentrated on defending until the last 10 minutes when they nearly produced an equaliser. With four minutes remaining, Palamaras crossed perfectly for Tsaltas but, with an open goal, his header flew inches over the bar.

Nathan Day: Winning substitute.

Adelaide Sharks: Mikuletic, Castro (Pezos 68), Kuzmanovic, Milosevic, Bigu, Tibaldi, Oliveira (Iandiorio 82), Artone, Tsekenis, Cardozo, Cutillo (Day 46).

Gippsland Falcons: Kourtis, Bell, Canosa, Gotis, Sekulic, Palamaras, Marcina, Foy, Thompson (Osman 72), McNicol (Hastie 60), Tricarico (Tsaltas 34).

SCORERS: ADELAIDE SHARKS: Day 52

Referee: Barry Panella

Crowd: 4,216

P.O.Y.

3: Bigu (AS)

2: Milosevic (AS)

1: Kuzmanovic (AS)

WOLLONGONG'S DUCK BROKEN

UTS OLYMPIC .....0 WOLLONGONG CITY 3

By John Economos

Wollongong City's savage first half mobile display of sustained attacking soccer enabled them to finally break their duck scoring their first win of the season when they downed a stunned and depleted Sydney Olympic 0-3 last Sunday night at the Sydney Football Stadium.

Within the first 39 minutes Wollongong had racked up all three goals against a shocked Olympic, who also lost their lanky central marker Ante Juric via a red card as early as the 19th minute.

In fact before the crowd had settled well into their seats Olympic had conceded two goals in addition to having lost their star, stocky striker Derek Poimer, who was carted off with a damaged medial knee ligament just four minutes after kick off.

Following a corner in the second minute of the match, Wolves served early warning they were hungry for their first win. Tall striker Scott Chipperfield climbed high but hit the left post with his header.

It seemed that from this very moment, failure for Wollongong was not to be considered as an option.

Two minutes later Poimer left the field injured and just seconds later Wollongong drew first blood when striker Tony Perinich scored from another corner, hit in by Anthony Surjan, with a fine header.

Stunned early, Olympic fell two goals behind by the eighth minute when sweeper Jason Connolly pushed up to meet a Matt Horsley free kick and he cleverly chipped into the box for Connolly to easily steer his header into the target.

Olympic's early woes were to be compounded in the 19th minute. Referee Matthew Breeze booked and subsequently marched Juric when he floored Chipperfield near the touchline for his second yellow, the first coming in the eighth.

Six minutes from the break Wollongong drove the final nail into Olympic's coffin with a third goal from Man Of The Match, Wollongong's 20 year old tenacious midfielder Noel Spencer.

A raiding Surjan sent a wonderful flat cross from the right into the box where the ever-so-grateful Spencer failed to disappoint by smacking it into the target first time.

From right here Olympic's task was always going to be 'Mission Impossible'.

Further chances fell to Wollongong but poor finishing deprived them from adding to the scoreboard.

Wollongong's defiant midfield quintet of Horsley, Spencer, Michael Reda, Surjan and Neil Harlock, right from kick off, appeared obsessed into grinding their opponents into the ground.

Perinich, in the 73rd, broke away to streak into the box but his drive on target was parried by Olympic's shell-shocked goalkeeper Bobby Catlin and Horsley, who had backed up, was only able to smash the rebound up against the base of the right post.

A very relieved and proud, as well as elated, Wollongong coach Nick Theodorakopoulos stated to ABSW later: "I was most happy with the collective effort my team exerted on them. I pushed an extra man (Neil Harlock) up for the first 20 minutes to sharpen the attack as well as block Emerton's raids down our left.

"Our midfield functioned well and I felt we were mobile all over the pitch, plus the fact that during the week we worked hard on all our set pieces. I also felt that we were tonight a far better team than the 3-0 scoreline showed. The team's future lies in the strong defensive work we put in."

Meanwhile a very disappointed Olympic coach Geoff Harcombe, lamented: "Loosing Poimer so early having Juric sent off so early it wasn't going to be so easy to come back. But even at 2-0 down we were fighting back but their third goal, which was diabolical, killed us off."

Tony Perinich: Drew first blood.

UTS OLYMPIC: Catlin: Ciantar, De Marigny, Juric, Jomaa: Emerton, Taliadoros (Ardone 65), Tsekenis, Hristodoulou, Tome, Poimer (Eagleton 4) (Baillie 22).

WOLLONGONG CITY: Hughes: Stanton (G.Souris 57), Connolly, Ceccoli: Horsley, Spencer, Reda (Sevin 60), Surjan (Huxley 81), Harlock: Perinich, Chipperfield.

SCORERS: WOLLONGONG Perinich 5, Connolly 8 and Spencer 39.

Referee: M.Breeze.

Crowd: 4,425.

P.O.Y.

3: Spencer (WC),

2: Chipperfield (WC),

1: Perinich (WC).

ERICSSON CUP

Results Round Five

Newcastle Breakers	2	Perth Glory	3
Canberra Cosmos	1	Adelaide City	2
Marconi Fairfield	2	South Melbourne	2
Brisbane Strikers	0	Carlton	1
Melbourne Knights	0	Sydney United	0
UTS Olympic	0	Wollongong Wolves	3
Adelaide Sharks	1	Gippsland Falcons	0

Round Five Fixtures

Odds courtesy of SportOdds

FRI, NOV 7	Sydney United	Draw	Newcastle
	1.70	3.30	4.00
SAT, NOV 8	Carlton	Draw	Mel Knights
	1.80	3.25	3.50
	Gippsland	Draw	Can Cosmos
	1.70	3.25	4.50
SUN, NOV 9	South Melbourne	Draw	Ad Sharks
	1.65	3.50	4.00
	Perth Glory	Draw	UTS Olympic
	2.25	3.25	2.75
	Adelaide City	Draw	Bris Strikers
	2.00	3.25	3.15
	Wollongong	Draw	Marconi
	2.50	3.25	2.50

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Round 6 Preview

By Stuart Jones

Gippsland Falcons v Canberra Cosmos
Friday 7/11/97 7.30pm

During the off-season both these sides faced the possibility neither would play this season. However both have come through and face each other at Falcons Park. Last season this game finished 0-0. The return clash ended 4-2 to Gippsland so anything could happen this time around.

Prediction: Gippsland win.

South Melbourne v Adelaide Sharks
Friday 7/11/97 8pm

This game finished as expected last season with South scoring a 1-0 win. In the game in Adelaide revenge was not dealt out as West Adelaide, as they were called then, lost 2-0.

Prediction: South Melbourne to continue their run against the Sharks.

Sydney United v Newcastle Breakers
Friday 7/11/97 7.30pm

United's second home match of the season and they are looking to continue their winning start. Over the last two seasons United have not lost at Parramatta Stadium. The Pumas defeated Newcastle 2-0 at Edensor Park last season and up at Newcastle were upset 3-1 by the Breakers

Prediction: Sydney United to continue their success at Parramatta.

Carlton SC v Melbourne Knights
Saturday 8/11/97 5pm

Aidan Ormond writes that Carlton at home are an awesome proposition. An expected 8-10,000 should see this classic, with the added spice of David Cervinski and Lubo Lapsansky up against former teammates. Marusic will be a handful for Kutlesovski and co. in the middle of the park. Can Marth stop Markovski? Can anyone stop him? I think not.

Prediction: Blues too good: 3-1.

Perth Glory v UTS Olympic
Sunday 9/11/97 4pm

Surprising to note that despite all the good news emanating from Perth and bad news from Olympic last season, that UTS actually spent a week more in the top six than Perth did, although when it counted neither were up there. UTS inflicted Perth's heaviest defeat at home by winning 4-1. Perth won 2-0 at Belmore.

Prediction: Perth to extract further revenge for last season's home defeat.

Adelaide City v Brisbane Strikers
Sunday 9/11/97 7.30pm

This game ended in a goalless draw last season. City actually won 3-1 away against the Strikers. Both squads have players with a heap of international experience and the Tobin v Farina/Brown battle should be terrific.

Prediction: Another tight game but the Zebras should come out on top.

Wollongong v Marconi Fairfield
Sunday 9/11/97 6.30pm

After two rounds at WIN Stadium the Wolves return to Brandon Park. Marconi's last away game was a 1-0 victory over the Falcons, while the Wolves drew 1-1 at home. Last season the game ended 3-2 with the home side in front, and at Marconi, Wolves lost 2-0.

Prediction: All things even after 90 minutes.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Carlton SC	5	4	1	0	10	4	13
Sydney United	5	3	2	0	8	3	11
Marconi	5	3	1	1	7	3	10
South Melbourne	5	2	3	0	11	6	9
Adelaide Sharks	5	3	0	2	9	7	9
Perth Glory	5	3	0	2	9	10	9
UTS Olympic	5	2	1	2	7	8	7
Adelaide City	4	2	0	2	7	7	6
Newcastle Breakers	5	1	2	2	8	9	5
Melbourne Knights	5	1	2	2	5	6	5
Wollongong Wolves	4	1	1	2	4	3	4
Gippsland Falcons	5	1	1	3	2	6	4
Brisbane Strikers	5	1	0	4	2	7	3
Canberra Cosmos	5	0	0	5	3	13	0

HOT SHOTS

Pablo Cardozo:
Adelaide Sharks 4
Clayton Zane:
Newcastle Breakers 4
David Mitchell:
Sydney United 3
Norman Tome:
UTS Olympic 3
Paul Trimboli:
South Melbourne 3

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U15 THU OCT 30, NOV 6, 13, 20
U16 FRI OCT 31, NOV 7, 14, 21
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0412152132
PETER JAKSIC
96322444

ERICSSON CUP

Match Reports

PETKOVIC DENIES IMPROVING COSMOS

CANBERRA COSMOS.....1 ADELAIDE CITY.....2

By Nick Guoth

This was a match where taking your chances was significant and Adelaide City did so, coming away from Canberra with a hard fought 2-1 win on Saturday night. For Novell Canberra Cosmos, this was their fifth loss in a row, yet they went down fighting.

The game was dominated by Cosmos from the beginning but they were thwarted either through inaccurate shooting or the superb goalkeeping of Jason Petkovic.

In the first half alone Canberra had seven shots to one. It was Michael Musitano who should have opened the scoring for Canberra, save for Bradley Armour's defending on the line. The Cosmos striker had another opportunity late in the half with a header from an Ante Moric free-kick but Petkovic was there to push the ball around the post.

But it was Adelaide's one chance that generated the only score of the half. Damian Mori made a good run down the left and his lay back found an unmarked Nick Sabljak in the box and he finished expertly.

The second half mirrored the first and, except for a ten minute spell midway through, the local fans were on the edge of their seats waiting for that first Canberra goal.

Ten minutes in and it was Ante Moric who took a quick free kick from 30m — it was heading for the top right hand corner but the hand of the brilliant Petkovic appeared as if out of nowhere and pushed the ball away for a corner.

Amidst the rare pressure from Adelaide, a second goal came. In exactly the same fashion as the first, Michael Brooks released Sabljak down the left for a low cross that was volleyed by Kris Trajanovski past Tony Giannasca to double the score. Classic counter-attack football.

Canberra stepped up the pressure and in time added on Paul Dee sent in a cross for Michael Musitano to head home. In the dying seconds it was only an outstretched hand by that man again, Petkovic, in a crowded six yard area, that kept the scoreline at 2-1 to the visitors.

Canberra coach Branko Culina, although unhappy with losing, would be pleased with the effort put in by most of his players. Paul Dee and Tom Haythornthwaite were strong in defence and Toplica Popovich practically marked Damian Mori out of the game.

For Adelaide, John Nyskohous was happy with the result but felt his team struggled fitness wise. He said: "It was a battling performance, a real struggle. We came for the win and got it, and at the moment that's what matters."

Kris Trajanovski: Scored match-winning goal.

Canberra Cosmos: Giannasca, Dee, Roberts, Zelic, Ravanello (Wilson 81), Moric, James (Lemezina 39), Musitano, Buljan (Brown 70), Popovich, Haythornthwaite

Adelaide City: Petkovic, Armour, Ivanovic, Tobin (Yates 81), Costanzo, Mori, Gibson, Trajanovski, Salapasidis (Brooks 59), Thomas (Brazzale 83), Sabljak

SCORERS:
CANBERRA: Musitano (90)
ADELAIDE: Sabljak (15), Trajanovski (67)

P.O.Y.:
3: Jason Petkovic (Ad City)
2: Paul Dee (Cosmos)
1: Tom Haythornthwaite

TRIMBOLI AND MARINO STAR

MARCONI.....2 SOUTH MELBOURNE 2

By John Economos

South Melbourne's captain and striker, Paul Trimboli, despite being shackled by former Inter Milan player Giuseppe Marino, still managed to be instrumental in the 2-2 draw on Saturday night at the Marconi Stadium.

A highly spirited Souths had Marconi on the ropes for most of the first session and only poor finishing denied the visitors a much larger scoreline than 0-1 at the break.

The skilled Trimboli in the 31st minute frustrated Marino with his ball control forcing the Italian star to foul him about 25 metres out near the touchline.

Referee Brett Hugo was forced to book the classy Italian and from the ensuing free-kick, Con Boutsianis scored, sending his screaming shot just inside the left post.

Boutsianis was able to exploit Marconi's inexplicable decision to position their smallest man, Christian Care, on the edge of the defensive wall, enabling the Lakers midfielder to easily score.

Almost immediately after, South coach Angie Postecoglou was forced to introduce Tansel Baser in place of Nick Orlic, who pinched a nerve in his spine (an injury sustained at training during the week).

Five minutes after the goal, there was action aplenty in Marconi's six yard box as Trimboli saw his header blocked by keeper Gibson, with the ball finally being cleared by Luke Casserly after a goalmouth scramble.

Four minutes from the end South scored a very well deserved equaliser through the recently returned John Anastasiadis, formerly of PAOK Salonika.

The genius of Trimboli engineered the move that enabled Anastasiadis to easily slip past three defenders to level the game and split the points.

In the first half though, Marconi's defensive line looked vulnerable as the mobile Southerners' midfield of Panopoulos, Anastasiadis, Davey Clarkson and Billy Damianos, plus the pacey Boutsianis poured through.

Too many Marconi defenders seemed more intent on pushing forward, leaving their last third zone exposed, except for the responsible Giuseppe Marino, whose professional experience allowed him to easily see the lurking danger in such suicidal endeavours.

Ten minutes after the break Marconi captain Brad Maloney equalised for the Stallions. A clearance out of the South defence found Maloney and his shot was hammered from 15 metres out and in to the back of the net.

On a rare occasion that Marino pushed forward, his attempt in the 66th minute from 25 out saw the ball spill back but Sean Babic blasted over after ricocheting the cross bar.

Christian Care, one of the younger Stallions, scored in the 78th minute to put the home side up 2-1, after Awaritife had set up Babic, and the rebound fell to Care who drove a rising shot home.

After the match an understandably disappointed Angie Postecoglou stated to ABSW: "We are still undefeated after five rounds, yet we have drawn three games, all 2-2, but there are signs that are encouraging. We worked hard everywhere on the field but again failed to kill our opponents off and with a little luck could have gone to the break three goals ahead. We must learn to kill teams off."

Meanwhile Marconi's surly Zoran Matic would only lament that "in the first half we played totally into their hands but we tried to rectify things in the second half. Some of the signs are starting to happen."

Con Boutsianis (right): Opened the scoring with a well taken free kick straight out of the text book.

Marconi: Gibson, Casserly, Souris, McDonald (Van Cuylenberg), Renaud (M. Babic 46), Care, Marino, Maloney, Zoric, S. Babic, Awaritife

Souths: Petkovic, Blatsis, De Amicis, Orlic (Baser 31), Panopoulos, Anastasiadis, Clarkson, Damianos, Boutsianis (Liparoti 83), Curcija (Coveny 62), Trimboli

SCORERS:
MARCONI: Maloney (55), Care (78)
SOUTH: Boutsianis (31), Anastasiadis (86)

Crowd: 5, 235

POY
3: Trimboli (Souths)
2: Marino (Marconi)
1: Clarkson (Souths)

STRIKERS LOSE AT HOME AGAIN!

BRISBANE STRIKERS .....0 CARLTON 1

By Glenn Davis

Carlton maintained their unbeaten run in the Ericsson Cup by sending champions Brisbane Strikers crashing to their third home defeat of the season with a torrid 1-0 win at Suncorp Stadium on Saturday night.

The reigning champions, who now have just one win from five matches, suffered a double blow with player/coach Frank Farina sent-off 17 minutes into the second half after his second bookable offence.

Brisbane referee Mark Shield showed Farina the yellow card in the 19th minute after a foul on Carlton's best player on the night, midfielder Rob Trajkovski, then, after the break, Farina was given an early shower for an allegedly dangerous tackle on sweeper David Cervinski.

Carlton, the surprise packet in their first season of Ericsson Cup football, absorbed a mountain of early pressure from the Strikers in the first half before taking a shock lead in the 36th minute.

After some good early work from midfielder Lubo Lapsansky, frontman Andy Vlahos wrong footed defenders Craig Williams and Steve Laybutt before tucking his shot, from the edge of the box, past Bolton and inside the upright.

Although the Strikers easily dominated the first session, the first scoring opportunity was missed by Carlton defender Sean Douglas who had ample time, but misdirected a header wide after a perfectly placed free-kick from last year's Player-of-the-Year, the classy Kresimir Marusic.

The Blues' near miss stung the home side into action launching a series of raids in the ensuing 15 minutes.

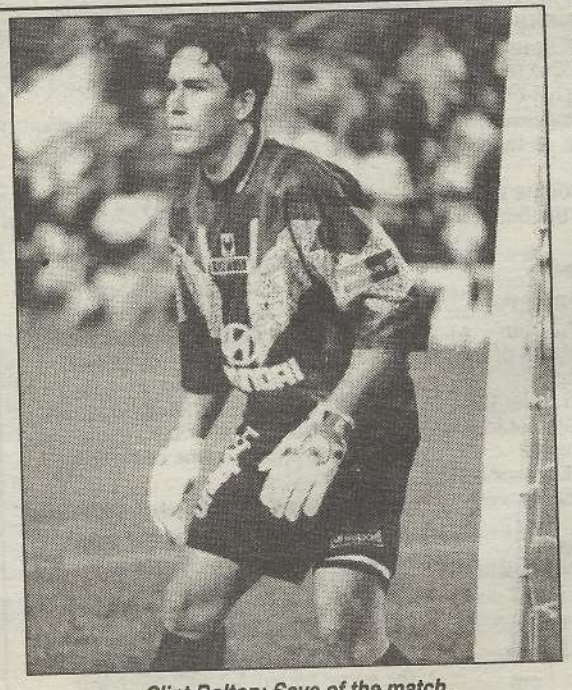
Rod Brown, starting for the first time at home this season, was given a slight hope of scoring off a perfectly weighted pass from Troy Cranney, before midfielder Chay Hews watched a 30 metre blast skim the ground wide of the upright eight minutes later.

One minute after his first booking a powerful strike from Brown was parried across the face of goal by Carlton keeper Dean Anastasiadis to Farina, who laid the ball off for Hews on the edge of the box, however, profligate finishing from the youngster let Carlton off the hook (a familiar story this year for the Strikers).

Refusing to lie down, the Strikers could have levelled when Glen Gwynne, making his return from injury, sent a perfect pass into the box for Farina, however, from an acute angle he lined up shot at the far post and watched agonisingly as it deceived the Carlton keeper and sailed just wide of the mark.

The Blues, with their one goal buffer, successfully shifted the game's momentum their way after the break with two early shots from former Socceroo John Markovski and Marusic in the first 15 minutes, but after Farina received his marching orders, the visitors were always confident they could hang on.

The best save of the evening came from Clint Bolton in the final 15 minutes when he dived to tip over a shot from Carlton's Mark Atkinson.



Clint Bolton: Save of the match.

Brisbane: Bolton, Gwynne, Bell (Battistin 80), Williams (Ditton 80), Laybutt, Hews, T Cranney, S Cranney (Brayshaw 75), Brown, Farina, Harper.

Carlton: Anastasiadis, Trajkovski, Stergiopoulos, Douglas, Anthopoulos, Marusic (Grella 86), Lapsansky, Vlahos (Bacak 90), Markovski (Allsopp 80), Cervinski, Atkinson.

SCORER:
CARLTON: Vlahos (26)

Crowd: 5,070

P.O.Y.
3: Trajkovski (Carlton)
2: T. Cranney (Strikers)
1: Marusic (Carlton)

Match Reports Cont...

GLORY TOO STRONG FOR BREAKERS

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS.....2 PERTH GLORY.....3

By Dane Skafte

A highly fancied Perth Glory side proved too strong, out-playing Newcastle Topper Breakers last Friday night at Topper Stadium.

From the opening whistle Glory took control and opened up the Newcastle backline, eventually recording a convincing 3-2 win in front of 4,183 spectators.

Breakers' defence, looking sketchy at the best of times, allied with a failure to finish off in front of goal, proved a headache for coach John Kosmina.

After seven minutes Breakers suffered a blow when young Micky Williams was taken to hospital with a suspected broken ankle. He was stretchered off the field after falling heavily while contesting for the ball with a Glory player.

The visitors opened the scoring in style after 14 minutes of play after Samson Siasia was brought down just outside the box. Bobby Despotovski took the resulting free-kick and sent in a low shot past Breakers keeper Liam Baker.

Undaunted, the home fans had something to cheer about eight minutes later when captain Shane Pryce converted from the spot to level the scores.

With the half time score still locked at 1-1, Perth gained the ascendancy in the second period. Striker Paul Strudwick was left unmarked at the back post and volleyed the ball past Baker, after good lead-up play on the wing.

Newcastle had their best opportunity of the evening but Clayton Zane missed from point blank range on the hour.

Five minutes later and Glory sealed the match with a goal by Scott Miller, after a great through ball from Socceroo Ernie Tapai. Newcastle did keep the scoreline respectable with a last minute consolation effort, when Benn Lane hammered a ferocious shot from 20 metres out that gave Glory keeper Tom Maras no chance.

Photo: Sports West Media.

Paul Strudwick: On target for Glory.

Newcastle: Baker, Sprod, Austin (Wilson 78), Pryce, McManus, Ironside, Ritchie, Zane, T Halpin, Bennett (Lane 78), Williams (Lowe 7).

Perth: Maras, Buljubasic, G Naven, Miller, McVittie, Strudwick (S Halpin 80), Despotovski, Tapai, Vukmirovic (Williamson 65), Siasia, Hay.

SCORERS:
NEWCASTLE:
Pryce (22 pen), Lane (89)
PERTH:
Despotovski (14), Strudwick (50), Miller (65)

Crowd: 4,100 (approx).

P.O.Y.:
3: Despotovski (Glory)
2: T. Halpin (Breakers)
1: Tapai (Glory)

BALMAIN BOYS DON'T CRY

By Stuart Jones

Unlike many players today Dave Barrett has never had an off-season like this one. For ten years 'DB' has worn the shirt of Sydney/UTS Olympic with pride. However that all came to an end recently, and, for the first time in ten years 'DB' changed clubs.

"It was very tough leaving Olympic, it was something I did not want to do. I do not want to get into my departure too deeply but it boiled down to the fact they had given me an offer, I went back to them a second time and I felt they reneged on the original offer. As far as I am concerned that did not give me any alternative but to leave the club.

"I have some great memories from my time at Olympic, we won the 1990 Grand Final, and also playing for my country in the Under/17 World Cup in China was great, having the opportunity to play Hugo Maradona (Diego's brother) and defeating Argentina and West Germany in that tournament.

"I have played alongside some great players in my time at Olympic, Robbie Hooker was a superb player, and is an even better player now, Alistair Edwards and Abbas Saad when they were on song were great to watch, Peter Raskopoulos was a fantastic player in his day, Chris Kalantzis was also brilliant, and Andrew Bernal would have to rate as one of the toughest players I have played with, or against. There were some really great times, but there are some really good times ahead too."

Barrett was offered a contract at Sydney United and, despite all the off-field drama, he snapped up the chance.

"Since I have arrived at United I have been very impressed not only with the coaching staff and the players but also the administrators. I am really looking forward to getting back on the park in four or five weeks."

His time at United so far has been marred by injury, and in the game against Adelaide City there was more drama as he ended up with a plastered arm from the game: "I got hit in a bad tackle and as I was falling I did not get to plant my hand properly and my body weight landed on my arm, breaking two bones. I have had an operation and am currently carrying around three pins and a plate in that arm. Apart from that things are looking good, and my arm is good for hailing a cab!!"

Barrett had an arthroscope six weeks ago on his knee and his full debut was delayed, finally coming on against Carlton the week prior to the Adelaide game, and he had marked the Brisbane 'game as the big comeback. "Oh well it was not meant to be so I will just have to be patient."

Dave is hoping player/coach Dave Mitchell plays him as an attacking fullback this season, "Last year I spent a lot of time playing stopper and sweeper at Olympic and found it very frustrating, to be honest, I was a little bit bored playing in such a central defensive role. I prefer to play out wide on the right, right fullback being my favourite position, as I love getting up field and getting crosses in. I think that is the strongest part of my game which means I have to be really fit and I am yet to get to reach peak fitness this year obviously. However now with the arm injury at least it will give me an opportunity to get the knee right, and in six weeks time I will be back better than ever."

The good news for Sydney United is the availability of the courageous Peter Bennett to take over this role while Barrett is out. The way Bennett is playing that may not be such good news for DB though.

He also adds to the chorus of people praising Mitchell.

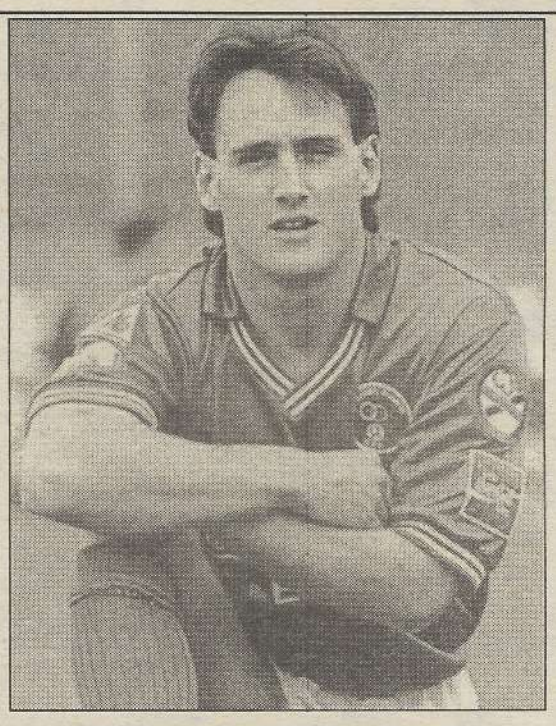
"Mitch is a very cagey character, you look at him play, what he has learnt overseas, the way he shields the ball, the way he dummies defenders, he is a joy to watch. He will teach the young blokes a lot. There are not many experienced players in the NSL these days, and it is only the Mitchells and Farinas who we can watch and learn from. Mitch is still learning as a coach but he is a first rate person, so honest and popular. We have got a very happy squad of players at present, and I think in Australia if you have a happy team and there are no politics involved in selections you go a long way to having a successful side. I really believe we will be successful."

The other change for both his old club and new club is they have changed grounds. He has differing views on the moves, "I do not think it was a good move for Olympic. They had settled down at Belmore and they were averaging 6 to 7000 spectators, now they are lucky to get 3000. I played with Olympic out at the Football Stadium in the late 1980s and we did not draw good crowds back then and I just do not think the supporter base is prepared to travel. I think they are an inner-west team, not a city team. As for Sydney United I think the move to Parramatta is a good move, I feel United and Marconi were too close together and one of the teams had to move and grow. It will be a good move, it might take a little while for the old supporters to become accustomed to travelling to Parramatta. The facilities here are tremendous, the playing surface is first class, conversely the football stadium is in a shocking state at the moment, and for supporters the ground at Parramatta is excellent.

"Here the Pumas are attracting new customers and to me that is what it is all about. I just hope the old supporters will also continue to barrack for us."

With a new club, new ground, and new surrounds, for Dave Barrett, come new aims.

"My short term aim is to get myself 100% fit and get myself back on the park. Long term I would like to end my career playing with Sydney United, I think I have quite a few year left in me yet! I would also hope that somewhere down the track there would be an opportunity for me to be involved in the coaching and development side of the club. I have had some coaching experience through the High school where I work as a teacher (Westfield Sports High).



Dave Barrett: Is not dwelling on the past.

"I like working with youngsters and I think it is an area I am good at, hopefully something like that will pan out in the future. My other aim is a message to Matt Horsley, I am coming to get him next time we go on Sale of the Century battle of the codes!!"

So despite what has happened in the last four months (of which one very bright point was that he got married), leaving Olympic and battling with injury, he continues to love the game and speak optimistically about the future.

Perhaps the biggest compliment to him is that despite all this drama he has kept it private. Many other players would have been very vocal in their anger at what happened, and would feel very bitter towards their old club, but not DB.

His biggest challenge may come in Round 23, as he will not be fit in time for the Round Seven clash, when he will take on his old team for the first time and will have to keep in mind not to pass the ball to the players in the blue shirts!

DAVE BARRETT FACT FILE

Born: Balmain 21st February 1969
Family: Married
Club: Sydney United
Previous Clubs: Sydney City, UTS Olympic
Appearances: 259 (all for Olympic)
Rep Honours: NSW captain 1995
Australian Joeys 1985 U/17 World Cup in China
Train on squad Young Socceroos
Occupation: Maths Teacher
Hobbies: Spending time with family, windsurfing, walking, movies.
Most Difficult opponent: Robbie Slater
Favourite OS club: Liverpool
Favourite OS player: John Barnes
Favourite Australian player: Paul Trimboli

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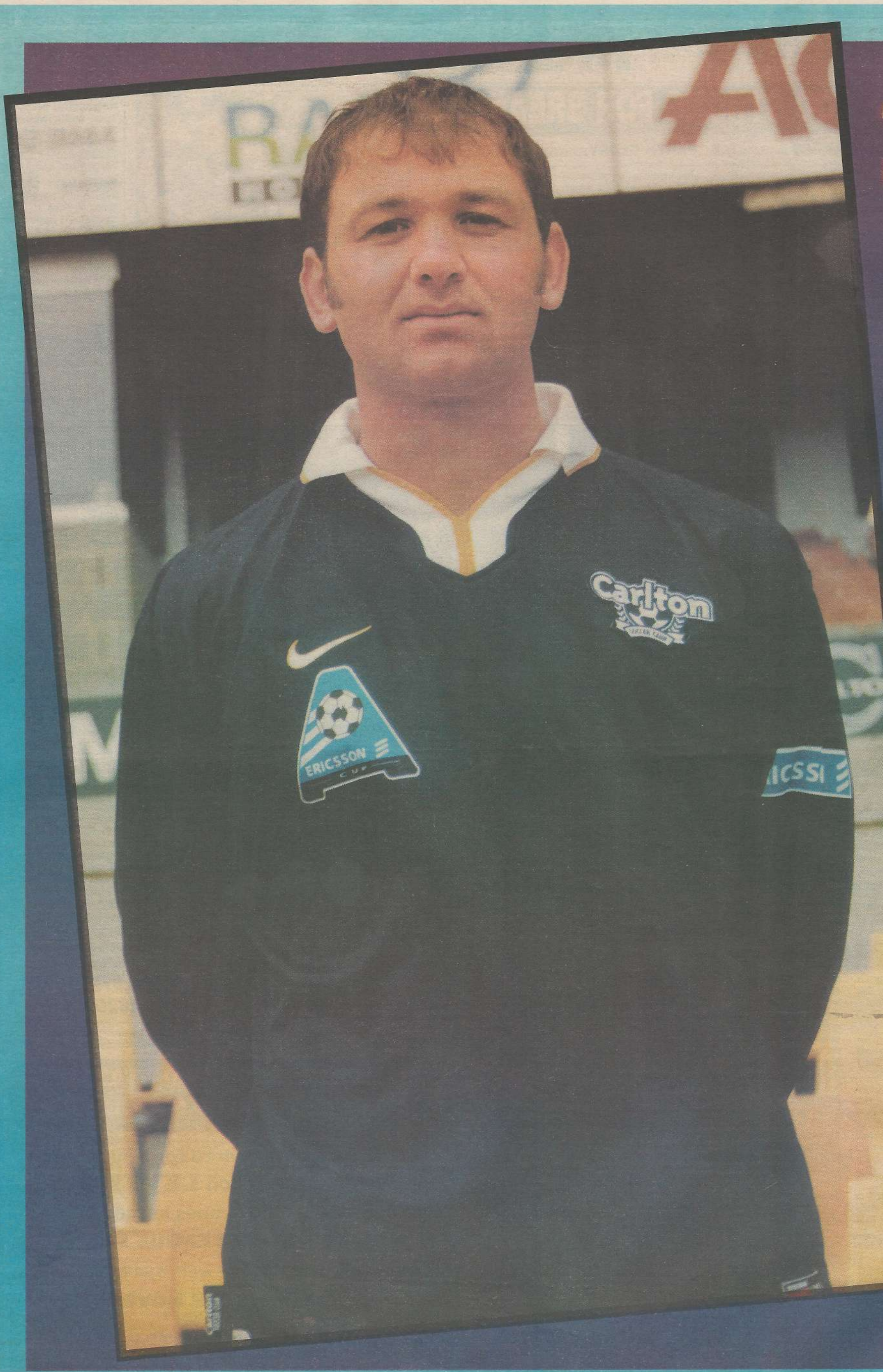

JOHN MARKOVSKI

DEL PIERO

Let me get in early. If big John Markovski continues to play the way he is playing, he should be drafted in to the Socceroo squad as quickly as possible. His bewitching performance, and two memorable goals, for Carlton against Adelaide City has re-confirmed what we always knew. That if he is not weighed down by dietary problems, he is a match-winner for his volume of talent is without peer among Australian players.

Whatever his new enlightenment, whatever coach Eddie Krncevic has done to help control his weight, a trim Markovski in full consistent flight is a mouth watering prospect. His all too few appearances in national colours bring back sweet memories. He was probably THE star of the 1992 Olyroo team in Barcelona. His dazzling performance, while still overweight, in a 2-1 win over Japan in a 1995 friendly in Sydney was another showpiece.

But the thrills he could conjure were always limited by his weight and by the volume of time he spent on the field. In 15 appearances for the senior Socceroos, he either came on as a substitute or was substituted. Not once did he spend the full 90 minutes on the field. He has not played for Australia since being subbed in that inglorious 4-1 defeat to Japan in Wollongong in early 1996.

Gazing down the list of Australian strikers, there are not too many, even overseas, who can match Markovski's ability. In terms of skills that might unlock stubborn World Cup defences, perhaps only Aurelio Vidmar and Mark Viduka are the only Aussie strikers that can match him. And his shooting power, those missiles he unleashes with his left foot, are totally unmatched by any other Australian squad member. He would, surely, be of immense value in dead-ball situations.

National assistant coach Raul Blanco says it would be too late now to draft him into the squad for the coming World Cup qualifiers this month, especially given the fact that Markovski needs to be given more time to prove he can maintain his self discipline. But he concurs that Markovski, potentially, remains a champion even among our heralded champions based abroad and that his recall may just be a matter of time.

◇ ◆ ◇ ◆ ◇

SO NEW ZEALAND were hammered 5-0 by Indonesia recently. There remains no doubt that the All Whites have reached probably the lowest ebb in their history and the dismissal of their coach seems imminent.

I repeat my call that their salvation may be in the employment of an Australian coach, someone fully experienced in how you evolve a colonial soccer country into one with some international respect.

But for the moment, the Kiwis are no more than a joke and a pathetic embarrassment to our region. The inclusion of an Auckland team in the Australian national league is, surely, unthinkable. What possible contribution would they make to the league and our football? Who in his or her right mind would pay money to see them play in Sydney or Melbourne, or anywhere in Australia?

Less of a waste of time would be to study the feasibility of entering a combined Oceanian team in the league or, why not, an Indonesian one. Wouldn't distance be a problem, I hear you ask. Why? Jakarta is closer to Perth than is Sydney or Brisbane. With full-time professionalism on the horizon, distance and travel time will soon be less and less relevant.

And besides, at least Indonesia would bring something new, something different to the league. And they would bring something an Auckland team would only take: money.

◇ ◆ ◇ ◆ ◇

LAST WEEKEND was a festive one in Raul Blanco's very Argentinian household. The barbecue sizzled and guests feasted merrily on generous portions of asado ribs spiced with chimichuri.

It was the wedding of daughter Veronica to a splendid young man of Uruguayan parentage, Raul tells me the wearing of shinpads was compulsory during the bridal waltz!

RAUL BLANCO

RADIO RIGHTS ... FARCE

By BOB BROOKS

Ownership of Ericsson Cup matches surely rests with Soccer Australia. Taking that statement as true, then broadcast rights for the season's games must belong to Australia's controlling body.

The only way that radio or television coverage of games in this competition should be able to occur is with the agreement of Soccer Australia.

In television, SBS have the 'free to air' rights with Optus Vision having a pay, or subscription, agreement.

It seems that radio broadcasting is not as closely controlled. There are thousands of commercial, community and ABC stations across the country. For a long time national soccer league games lacked electronic coverage (apart from SBS TV). With the recent expansion in the number of radio stations, this situation is changing.

An attempt was made three years ago to cover games on radio and to put together a national network. Making it all happen proved to be too much of a challenge and the attempt was abandoned.

Individual stations provide coverage specific to their home location. For instance Perth Glory games go live-to-air both home and away. Another example is in Adelaide where 5AA, a major commercial station, broadcast each home game of both City and Sharks.

It should be obvious that the more broadcasts there are of Ericsson Cup games the better for the competition itself and for all the sponsors involved.

Restriction of broadcasting rights is not therefore in the best interests of any organisation involved in the game. Despite this, UTS Olympic have blocked an outlet from putting to air their games at the Sydney Football Stadium by granting exclusive radio broadcast rights to radio station 2MM.

With ownership of the Ericsson Cup resting indisputably with Soccer Australia, the broadcast rights must, therefore, also belong to them. Surely individual clubs are not at liberty to give exclusivity to any organisation?

What happens when a visiting club wish to have their game against UTS Olympic broadcast back to their home fans? Under the current arrangements they will be excluded!

Resolution of this unacceptable state of affairs needs to be attended to by those at Soccer Australia running the Ericsson Cup, in the interests of a fair go.

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WOMEN'S WRITES

BY JANENE MAR

ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES
...Women's National Soccer League

QUEENSLAND.....3 VICTORIA.....1

Reigning champions Queensland came back from their disappointing showing on Friday night to defeat a determined Victoria 3-1 in the Sunday match of the Ansett Summer Series match in Brisbane.

Queensland performed well in the first half, Australian team members Kim Revell and Alicia Ferguson dangerous in attack.

Victoria's defence held together solidly, goalkeeper Emma Bracken pulling off some great saves.

The Queenslanders took the lead in the 34th minute when a high ball pumped into the box was touched on towards goal and blocked. Georgette Leake won the scramble, hooking the ball over the line while sprawled on the ground.

Queensland went two ahead 14 minutes after the break, Ferguson unmarked and driving low from 15 metres.

Victoria's fighting qualities were rewarded when they pulled one back in the 71st minute, Gabby Angelucci slotting the ball home after the goalkeeper blocked a shot.

Victoria fought hard to draw even, but 12 minutes later conceded a third to Queensland, Ferguson curling one in from the right touchline for a final scoreline of 3-1.

POOL A POINTS LADDER:

SA:.....6
QLD:.....3
VIC:.....0

ROUND THREE (POOL B) IN NEWCASTLE

Fri Nov 7: 7pm NNSW v NSWIS
Sat Nov 8: 3pm NSWIS v ACTAS
Sun Nov 9: 3pm NNSW v ACTAS
Venue: Topper Stadium in Birmingham Gardens, Newcastle.

Alicia Ferguson

INDIA SERIES OFF

The two games between India and Australia are off. This means Australia do not have lead up matches going into the game against China on November 16.

Plans are in place for a week long training camp instead, with an exhibition game between squad players now on the agenda.

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SOCCER ASSOCIATION

STH AUSTRALIA TAKE REVENGE OVER QLD

1996/97 runners-up S.A. Sports Institute exacted revenge against champions Queensland Academy of Sport with an emphatic 3-1 victory in Friday night's Ansett Australia Summer Series Pool A opener in Brisbane in the 'Grand Final Replay'.

The match kicked off at a furious pace, QAS attacking early and testing Tracey Wheeler, in her comeback game, with a good shot in the first couple of minutes.

Queensland were looking polished for the first match of the season with some neat passing combinations in attack and good work off the ball.

SASI however created a few opportunities of their own, and were dangerous on the counter-attack.

QAS took the lead in the 31st minute. Lisa Dunne beat one defender before powering her strike at goal despite the valiant attempts of Wheeler who managed to get a hand to it.

Just two minutes later the home side almost doubled their lead, with Tammie Thornton's long range effort thumping the crossbar.

One minute in to the second half and SASI made a raid up the left hand side and Kristy Moore, waiting at the far post, climbed well and headed the ball down and in for the equaliser.

Within eight minutes there was a second for SASI, with Sharon Black unleashing a long range 'bomb' from wide and Natalie Thomas was on hand to touch the ball in from about a metre out.

SA continued their rampage and the third goal was not far away. This time it was Black who claimed it, with her free-kick deceiving the defence and bouncing in through the outstretched clutches of Belinda Kitching.

In the final 15 Queensland rallied but it was all in vain, and SASI finished worthy winners.

QAS: Kitching, Garven, Stork, Gegenhuber, Leake (Colwell 67), Revell, Short (Whiddett 77), Mann, Thornton, Dunne, Ferguson.

SASI: Wheeler, Winn, Alagich, Trubee (Karp 75), Forby, Morris, Stocco (Hollands 46), Black, Moore, Thomas, Halfpenny (Ruotolo 77).

Tracy Wheeler

SASI HOLD OUT FOR WIN OVER VICS

SASI took maximum points for the weekend after Saturday's tight 2-0 win over a dogged ITC Victoria at Perry Park.

Sharon Black scored early (after only 38 secs!), but to their credit the Victorians bounced back and almost scored but Louisa Bisby's 'goal' was pulled back and disallowed.

However SA regained composure and scored just before halftime, when Winn threaded the ball through to Sharon Black who, on the edge of the area, turned her marker and drove the ball into the net for a 2-0 lead going into the break.

Understandably SASI tired in the second half, given they had played the previous night, and rarely made it out of their half, however the Victorians, despite a glut of possession, failed to convert it into goals.

Sharon Black

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS FORMAT DISCUSSED

"Australia's intention at these meetings was to ensure that the qualification wouldn't revolve around a one-off final, and the outcome was a successful one," said AWSA chief executive Warren Fisher, who travelled to New Zealand recently for meetings concerning next year's Oceania World Cup qualifying rounds.

At this stage, of the ten Oceania members Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu have expressed an interest in participating.

The World Cup Qualifiers are scheduled for 3-18 October 1998, at Mt Smart Stadium in Auckland.

NZ FA

OCEANIA O.F.C.

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Around the Globe

England

Premier Division

Leaders Manchester United made it 13 goals in two games as they cantered to a 6-1 victory over Sheffield Wednesday at Old Trafford while Arsenal lost their unbeaten record in a 3-0 defeat at Derby in the English Premiership.

Andy Cole, Teddy Sheringham and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer each scored twice as United warmed up in style for tommorow's European Champions' League clash against Feyenoord in Rotterdam.

Alex Ferguson's men now have 28 points, four clear of Arsenal and Blackburn, who drew 1-1 at Barnsley. Leicester are fourth on 22 points after drawing 3-3 with Newcastle at St. James' Park.

Elsewhere, Liverpool, for whom Robbie Fowler scored and was sent off, drew 1-1 at Bolton, while Aston Villa lost 2-0 at home to Chelsea.

Leeds won 1-0 at Tottenham, Coventry beat Wimbledon 2-1 at Selhurst Park.

Barnsley went behind to Blackburn after 30 minutes when Tim Sherwood stabbed home from close range for Rovers, but the home side levelled with a cracking shot from Jovo Bosancic after 79 minutes.

John Barnes was on target from the penalty spot after four minutes at St. James' Park against high-flying Leicester. Marshall headed home the equalizer, and then repeated the feat from Muzzy Izzet's cross to put Leicester 2-1up before Jon-Dahl Tomasson made it 2-2 at halftime.

Matt Elliott, Leicester, and John Beresford scored late goals.

Fowler fired Liverpool ahead at Bolton's Reebok Stadium after just 49 seconds but was sent-off for apparently elbowing an opponent in the second half.

Mark Hughes netted on his 34th birthday to put Chelsea 1-0 up at Aston Villa after Dwight Yorke had missed a penalty for the home side.

Norwegian Tore Andre Flo made it 2-0 in the second half to put Chelsea in good heart for Thursday's European Cup Winners' Cup return against Tromso of Norway.

Darren Huckerby hooked in Coventry's first away goal of the season at Wimbledon and Dion Dublin, back in the side, clinched Coventry's first away win of the season despite Carl Cort's headed effort for the home side.

There was more woe for Gerry Francis at White Hart Lane as Rod Wallace rolled in his eighth of the season to give Leeds the points.

Premier League

Aston Villa	0	Chelsea Hughes 38 Flo 82	2
Barnsley Bosancic 79	1	Blackburn Rovers Sherwood 30	1
Bolton Wand. Blake 84	1	Liverpool Fowler 1	1
Derby County Wanchope 46, 65 Sturridge 82	3	Arsenal	0
Man Utd Sheringham 13, 63, Cole 20, 38 Solskjaer 41, 75	6	Sheff Wed Whittingham 69	1
Newcastle Utd Barnes 4p Tomasson 45 Beresford 90	3	Leicester City Marshall 12, 32 Elliott 54	3
Tottenham H	0	Leeds Utd Wallace 20	1
Wimbledon Cort 28	1	Coventry C Huckerby 17 Dublin 22	2
Everton	0	Southampton Le Tissier 24 Davies 54	2

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Man Utd	13	8	4	1	29	7	28
Arsenal	13	6	6	1	27	13	24
Blackburn	13	6	6	1	23	11	24
Chelsea	12	7	1	4	27	15	22
Leicester	13	6	4	3	19	13	22
Derby	12	6	2	4	22	15	20
Leeds	13	6	2	5	16	13	20
Liverpool	12	5	4	3	21	13	19
Newcastle	10	5	2	3	12	13	17
Wimbledon	13	4	4	5	15	15	16
West Ham	12	5	1	6	16	19	16
Coventry	13	3	7	3	10	14	16
Crystal Palace	12	4	3	5	12	14	15
Aston Villa	13	4	2	7	12	19	14
Tottenham	13	3	4	6	11	17	13
Southampton	12	3	1	8	13	20	13
Everton	11	3	3	5	13	16	12
Bolton	12	2	6	4	10	16	12
Barnsley	13	1	3	9	10	36	10
Sheff Wed	13	2	3	8	18	35	9

Division 1

Bradford	0	West Brom	0
Charlton	3	Ipswich	0
Huddersfield	3	Stoke	1
Norwich	2	Bury	2
Nottm Forest	3	Crewe	1
Oxford Utd	0	Man City	0
Port Vale	0	Reading	0
QPR	1	Birmingham	1
Sheff Utd	2	Tranmere	1
Stockport	1	Sunderland	1
Wolverhampton	1	Middlesbrough	0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Nottm Forest	14	9	3	2	24	11	30
Swindon	15	8	4	3	19	17	28
Charlton	14	7	4	3	30	18	25
Sheff Utd	12	7	4	1	20	10	25
WBA	14	7	4	3	17	12	25
Middlesbrough	13	7	3	3	23	13	24
Bradford	14	6	6	2	16	14	24
QPR	14	6	4	4	19	20	22
Wolverhampton	15	6	4	5	18	16	22
Sunderland	14	6	3	5	20	18	21
Birmingham	15	5	6	4	17	12	21
Stoke	14	6	3	5	16	17	21
Stockport	15	5	5	5	23	22	20
Port Vale	15	5	4	6	19	18	19
Bury	15	3	7	5	17	23	16
Norwich	14	4	4	6	11	21	16
Crewe	15	4	3	8	18	23	15
Oxford Utd	15	4	3	8	18	23	15
Reading	15	3	6	6	16	24	15
Man City	14	3	5	6	17	16	14
Ipswich	13	3	5	5	13	16	14
Tranmere	14	3	3	8	20	22	12
Portsmouth	14	2	4	8	16	23	10
Huddersfield	15	1	5	9	11	23	8

Division 2

Bournemouth	0	Brentford	0
Bristol City	1	Oldham	0
Burnley	2	Walsall	1
Carlisle	2	Wrexham	2
Fulham	1	Chesterfield	1
Gillingham	1	Millwall	3
Grimsby	5	Southend	1
Northampton	1	Bristol Rovers	1
Preston	0	Plymouth	1
Watford	4	Blackpool	1
Wigan	1	York	1
Wycombe	2	Luton	2

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Watford	15	11	2	2	27	11	35
Bristol City	15	8	3	4	21	12	27
Northampton	15	7	6	2	17	10	27
Millwall	14	8	2	4	21	14	26
Gillingham	15	7	3	5	21	18	24
York	15	6	4	5	21	20	22
Bournemouth	15	5	7	3	16	12	22
Oldham	15	5	6	4	23	21	21
Bristol Rovers	15	5	6	4	19	18	21
Chesterfield	15	5	6	4	16	15	21
Wycombe	15	5	5	5	24	23	20
Blackpool	16	6	2	7	23	27	20
Grimsby	15	5	5	5	17	16	20
Wigan	15	5	4	6	22	23	19
Wrexham	14	5	4	5	21	19	19
Preston	15	5	4	6	14	12	19
Fulham	15	5	4	6	14	15	19
Luton	15	4	5	6	4	21	17
Brentford	15	4	4	8	17	22	16
Walsall	15	4	3	8	18	23	15
Southend	15	4	3	8	15	29	15
Burnley	15	2	5	8	14	17	14
Plymouth	15	2	7	6	15	22	13
Carlisle	15	1	9	5	19	12	12

Division 3

Barnet	1	Notts County	2
Cambridge Utd	1	Torquay	1
Chester	4	Rochdale	0
Darlington	4	Hull	3
Exeter	0	Peterborough	0
Hartlepool	0	Brighton	0
Lincoln City	1	Leyton Orient	0
Rotherham	1	Macclesfield	0
Scarborough	4	Doncaster	0
Shrewsbury	3	Mansfield	2

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Notts County	15	5	9	1	23	13	32
Peterborough	15	9	4	3	33	14	31
Exeter	15	8	5	3	22	14	29
Lincoln City	15	8	4	3	17	13	28
Scarborough	15	7	3	5	23	19	24
Barnet	15	7	3	5	22	20	24
Scunthorpe	14	7	3	4	17	15	24
Chester	15	7	2	6	25	22	23
Colchester	15	6	5	4	24	22	23
Macclesfield	15	5	7	3	9	14	22
Rotherham	15	5	6	4	22	20	21
Hartlepool	15	4	9	2	21	18	21
Torquay	15	5	5	5	20	20	20
Cambridge Utd	15	4	6	5	20	19	18
Shrewsbury	15	5	3	7	20	22	18
Mansfield	15	5	3	7	18	17	18
Cardiff	13	3	8	2	14	14	17
Leyton Orient	15	4	5	6	14	16	17
Rochdale	15	5	1	9	19	21	16
Darlington	15	3	6	6	19	24	15
Swansea	14	4	1	9	17	24	13
Hull	15	3	3	9	18	27	12
Brighton	15	2	5	8	11	21	11
Doncaster	15	0	4	11	9	38	4

Scotland

Celtic's refusal to cave in to the star system might, ironically, prove to be the catalyst which takes them back to the heights of Scottish soccer.

The club, who have played in the shadow of perennial champions Rangers for nine years, have tasted life at the top already this season and were only knocked into second place by Hearts on goals scored after beating Dunfermline 2-0.

Rivals Rangers, seeking a record 10th successive league title, are a point behind.

Celtic's Dutch coach Wim Jansen has worked a remarkable transformation in fortunes while still in the process of rebuilding the side he took over from Tommy Burns last July.

However, the biggest change of all at Parkhead seems to be one of attitude. Instead of putting their faith in false idols, the 1967 European Cup-winning team is still a major topic of conversation in the local pubs ,the club's massive support is discovering that the new all-for-one mentality of the current Celtic side works much better.

After losing their opening two matches, Jansen's team has won six and drawn two of the subsequent premier division games, reached the final of the League Cup and were unlucky to be knocked out of the UEFA Cup by Liverpool on the away goals rule. They are now unbeaten in 14 matches.

Last week's win over St Johnstone, coupled with Rangers' defeat at Dundee United took Celtic to the top of the table for the first time in a year.

Hearts retook top spot on Saturday after a 4-1 win at Aberdeen but third-placed Rangers are still the team to beat.

Dutch winger Regi Blinker, who played under Jansen at Feyenoord and who scored on Saturday, insisted: "It doesn't make any difference to me that we have gone to the top. This team can concentrate very well on one game at a time."

That is difficult for the fans in this soccer-mad city with an Old Firm double header looming this month.

Premier Division

Aberdeen Windass 22	1	Hearts McCann 54, Flogel 65, 82 Smith 76og	4
Dunfermline	0	Celtic Blinker 67 Larsson 86	2
Hibernian Crawford 85	1	Dundee United Olofsson 26, 88, McSwegan 90	3
Rangers Negri 5, 87p, 90 Porrini 85	4	Kilmarnock Mitchell 43	1
St Johnstone Kernaghan 18 O'Neil 33, 60 Grant 49p	4	Motherwell Hendry 61p Davies 66 Coyle 72	3

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Hearts	11	8	0	3	26	13	24
Celtic	10	8	0	2	21	8	24
Rangers	10	7	2	1	34	13	23
St Johnstone	11	4	3	4	12	15	15
Dundee Utd	11	3	4	4	19	19	13
Hibernian	11	3	3	5	19	18	12
Dunfermline	11	3	3	5	15	28	12
Kilmarnock	11	3	2	6	8	23	11
Aberdeen	11	2	3	6	12	21	9
Motherwell	11	2	2	7	16	24	8

Division 1

Airdrie	1	Raith	0
Dundee	0	Partick	0
Hamilton	1	Greenock Morton	0
Stirling	0	St Mirren	0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Hamilton	11	7	3	1	20	9	24
Dundee	11	7	3	1	17	7	24
Raith	11	5	3	3	15	10	18
Falkirk	10	5	2	3	17	19	17
Airdrie	11	3	6	2	10	9	15
Ayr	10	3	3	4	12	12	12
St Mirren	11	3	3	5	11	15	12
Partick	11	1	5	5	13	20	8
Morton	11	2	2	7	10	17	8
Stirling	11	1	4	6	12	19	7

Division 2

Forfar	2	Clyde	2
Inverness Cal.	0	Brechin	0
Stenhousemuir	0	East Fife	0
Stranraer	1	Livingston	1

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Livingston	11	6	4	1	18	11	22
Clydebank	10	4	5	1	12	6	17
East Fife	11	5	2	4	16	16	17
Stranraer	11	4	4	3	18	13	16
Forfar	11	5	1	5	20	21	16
Stenhousemuir	11	4	2	5	15	19	14
Queen of South	10	4	1	5	18	18	13
Clyde	11	3	4	4	14	16	13
Brechin	11	2	4	5	12	20	10
Inverness Cal.	11	1	5	5	15	16	8

Division 3

Berwick	1	Albion	1
Cowdenbeath	0	Alloa	3
East Stirling	1	Arbroath	2
Montrose	2	Dumbarton	2
Queen's Park	0	Ross County	3

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Ross County	12	8	2	2	31	17	26
Arbroath	11	7	1	3	24	13	22
Alloa	11	7	0	4	24	13	21
Albion	11	6	2	3	22	20	20
Queen's Park	12	5	4	3	16	13	19
East Stirling	11	6	0	5	18	18	18
Berwick	11	4	2	5	18	19	14
Montrose	11	2	3	6	16	26	9
Dumbarton	11	1	4	6	15	23	7
Cowdenbeath	11	1	0	10	3	25	3

Germany

The big clash between ambitious VfB Stuttgart and UEFA Cup holders Schalke 04 in the German first division disappointed the 50,000 strong crowd with just one real scoring chance in a dull 0-0 draw.

Schalke, who finished a poor 12th in the Bundesliga last season while shining on the European scene, earned a point which allowed them to stay third behind leaders Kaiserslautern and second placed Bayern Munich.

Stuttgart stayed fifth, one place behind Hansa Rostock, who could only manage a 2-2 draw at home to VfL Bochum.

Troubled Karlsruhe recovered some pride by using a double from international playmaker Thomas Haessler to beat Cologne 3-1 and climb three places up to 13th.

There was satisfaction also for newcomers Hertha Berlin, who recorded their third victory of the season, and their second in succession, by winning 2-0 at Werder Bremen.

The Berlin club are now level with Bochum on 12 points but stuck to the bottom spot because of a poorer goal difference.

Karlsruhe Ritter 56 Hassler 68, 90	3	Cologne Polster 42	1
VfB Stuttgart	0	Schalke 04	0
Werder Bremen	0	Hertha Berlin Trares 9-og, Preetz 88	2
Hansa Rostock Barbarez 20 Micevski 75	2	Bochum Donkov 52 Peschel 59	2

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Kaiserslautern	13	9	3	1	27	14	30
Bayern Munich	12	7	4	1	27	13	25
Schalke 04	13	6	4	3	14	12	22
Hansa Rostock	13	6	3	4	21	15	21
VfB Stuttgart	13	5	4	4	26	18	19
Bayer Leverk.	13	5	4	4	23	18	19
Borussia M.	13	4	5	4	25	24	17
VfL Wolfsburg	13	5	2	6	17	20	17
MSV Duisbur	13	5	2	6	15	18	17
Hamburg SV	12	4	4	4	18	19	16

Around the Globe

Bielefeld	12	5	0	7	16	17	15
1860 Munich	11	4	3	4	16	20	15
Karlsruhe	12	4	3	5	21	26	15
Werder Bremen	13	4	6	3	14	20	15
Dortmund	13	3	5	5	20	19	14
Cologne	13	4	1	8	19	28	13
VfL Bochum	13	3	3	7	18	26	12
Hertha Berlin	13	3	3	7	13	23	12

Russia

Spartak Moscow outplayed Vladikavkaz 2-1 in the penultimate round of the Russian championship on Saturday, setting up a championship decider against rivals Volgograd next Sunday.

Volgograd were held to a 1-1 away draw by Torpedo Moscow and are now placed second, two points behind reigning champions Spartak, who have won the championship four times since 1992.

Volgograd will have to beat visitors Spartak in their November 9 showdown in order to clinch their first title.

The other title contenders, Dynamo Moscow, shared the points with Novorossiisk in a 1-1 draw, losing any chance of taking the title.

Yaroslavl, newcomers to the top flight, surprisingly climbed to fourth spot.

The provincial club, whose head coach Anatoly Polosin died mid-season, are now set to obtain a berth in the UEFA Cup if one of the top trio clinch the Russian Cup competition.

Samara	3	Rostov	0
St.Petersburg	2	Lokom.Moscow	0
CSKA Moscow	3	Nyzhny Novgorod	0
Novorossiisk	1	Dynamo Moscow	1
Chelny	3	Voronezh	0
Spartak Mos.	2	Vladikavkaz	1
Torpedo Mos.	1	Volgograd	1
Yaroslavl	2	Sochi	1
Kaliningrad	2	Tyumen	0

Standings (after 33 matches):

Spartak Moscow 70 points, Volgograd 68, Dynamo Moscow 65, Yaroslavl 52, Lokomotiv Moscow 51, Novorossyisk 50, Samara 49, St.Petersburg 48, Kaliningrad 48, Vladikavkaz 46, Torpedo Moscow 45, CSKA Moscow 41, Rostov 40, Sochy 37, Tyumen 34, Voronezh 25, Nyzhny Novgorod 22, Chelny 21 (six points deducted).

Spain

High-flying Espanyol crashed out of the Spanish Cup on Wednesday after going down 2-1 at home to third division Figueres, their first defeat of the season.

Three other first division sides - Tenerife, Oviedo and Sporting Gijon - were also knocked out in second round.

Barcelona, Real Madrid and other sides involved in European competitions are exempt from the opening rounds of the Cup.

Oviedo (Aggregate 0-1)	0	Alaves	0
Compostela (Aggregate 1-0)	1	Eibar	0
Racing Sant. (Aggregate 4-3)	2	Numancia	1
Real Sociedad (Aggregate 2-0)	0	Burgos	0
Sporting Gijon (Aggregate 1-2)	0	Osasuna	1
Espanyol (Aggregate 2-3)	1	Figueres	2
Zaragoza (Aggregate 3-2)	2	Lleida	1
Merida (Aggregate 3-0)	3	Badajoz	0
Salamanca (Aggregate 3-0)	2	Toledo	0
Extremadura (Aggregate 1-0)	0	Rayo Vallecano	0
Valencia (Aggregate 4-0)	1	Hercules	0
Elche (Aggregate 0-1)	0	Novelda	0
Recreativo H. (Aggregate 4-1)	2	Isla Cristina	0
Tenerife (Aggregate 4-5)	2	Las Palmas	2
Jaen (Aggregate 0-1; Xerez on away goals)	1	Xerez	1
Mallorca (Aggregate 7-1)	6	Soller	0
Albacete (Aggregate 4-4, Lorca on away goals)	2	Lorca	4
Celta Vigo (Aggregate 3-1)	2	Ourense	0

Barcelona took just four minutes to take the lead at previously-unbeaten Real Madrid when Rivaldo netted his seventh goal of the season. Real equalized through Raul after 48 minutes before Luis Enrique scored against his old club to make it 2-1 to Barca.

Davor Sukor equalized a second time for Real after 62 minutes, but Real had no reply to Giovanni's winner 11 minutes from the end.

It was only the 12th time Barcelona had won at Real in 68 league meetings, the last occasion was in the 1992-93 season.

Athletic Bilbao	3	Tenerife	0
Real Madrid	2	Barcelona	3
Real Betis	2	Atletico Madrid	3
Valladolid	0	Mallorca	0

Russia

George Weah ended AC Milan's season of misery with two goals in a 3-0 win over Sampdoria on Sunday, but the real hero of the day in Serie A was Bologna's Roberto Baggio.

A string of chances went begging in the first half for AC Milan and it looked as if two months of suffering was destined to continue.

But the match changed suddenly when Sampdoria lost key Yugoslav midfielder Sinisa Mihajlovic for a second bookable offence in the 67th minute.

Weah promptly broke the deadlock in the 74th minute, diverting Demetrio Albertini's low, inaccurate shot into the net, and then added another in 80th, skillfully rounding the keeper before slotting home.

German defender Christian Ziege scored the third with his first goal in Italy, a fine 20-yard drive after a neat pass from France's Ibrahim Ba.

But whatever Weah managed for Milan, Baggio was able to go one better with a hat-trick in Bologna's stunning 5-1 home victory over Napoli.

After a nightmare start, the Dall'Ara stadium fans were treated to a pulsating finish which saw Napoli miss a late penalty for 2-2 and Bologna score three goals in injury time.

Juventus	4	Udinese	1
Inter Milan	1	Parma	0
Roma	1	Lazio	3
Bologna	5	Napoli	1
AC Milan	3	Sampdoria	0

Holland

Feyenoord ended a four-match losing streak with a 2-1 victory over RKC Waalwijk in the Dutch first division on Sunday.

Argentine duo Patricio Graff and Julio Cruz had them 2-0 up with Carlos van Wanrooy claiming a late consolation for the visitors.

Former club captain John Metgod has taken temporary charge of coaching at the club, who are fourth in the standings, while Ajax still leads the division.

Fortuna Sit.	0	NEC Nijmegen	2
Twente Ens.	1	Vitesse Arnhem	1
NAC Breda	2	Graafschap Doet.	0
Heerenveen	1	PSV Eindhoven	1
MVV Maas.	1	Willem II Tilburg	0
Ajax	1	Roda JC	1
Volendam	0	Utrecht	1

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Italian Affair

By Joe Russo

Last Thursday's 1-1 draw in Moscow between Italy and Russia has certainly placed the Azzurri in the box seat to qualify for France '98. It means a result of 0-0 in the game at the San Paolo Stadium in Naples on November 15 will be sufficient to put the Azzurri through to the World Cup Finals ... once again.

Just as significantly it ended Italy's goal drought at international level after three consecutive 0-0 results. It must be a relief to coach Maldini because with Italy looking good to qualify for France, his job is fairly secure for a while yet.

ALESSANDRO DEL PIERO

Italy suffered the misfortune of losing first choice keeper Angelo Peruzzi (Juventus) before the game because of injury. It meant a welcome return for Gianluca Pagliuca (Inter) at international level but it was a short return as Pagliuca himself was injured in the 31st minute and had to leave the field.

Up stepped 19 year old Gianluigi Buffon (Parma) - who travelled to Moscow as third choice goalkeeper and surely never would have dreamed he would be making an appearance. He made his international debut and performed very well, just as he has for Parma the last two seasons.

Up front Maldini opted for Vieri (Atletico Madrid) and Ravanelli (Marseille), who was also making a return to the international team. Just behind them was Zola (Chelsea) and it must be some sort of record that the Azzurri's three key front men do not play in the Serie A, though in the second half Ravanelli was replaced by Del Piero (Juventus).

The weather conditions were atrocious with snow falling constantly during the game. At some stages the pitch resembled a mud bath - the conditions suited neither team.

Italy's tactics were typical of Maldini, all defence and then the counter-attack. Credit must go to the midfield where there was a marked improvement from the effort against England. It was able to contain the very quick Russian midfield quite effectively.

If the Azzuri had played this well in their last three qualifying games there would certainly have been no need for them to be in Moscow as they would have already qualified.

Vieri's goal came in the third minute of the second half and was the first goal the national side has ever scored in Moscow. Italy has still to win a game there but at least they notched a goal.

Unfortunately for Italy three minutes later Russia equalised after Cannavaro (Parma) deflected a shot into his own net. However the Azzurri would not have been too upset at the final result. Offered such a result before the game they would have gladly accepted!

In the closing minutes the Russians threw everything at Italy but could not find a way through.

While the return leg in Naples looks promising, the Azzurri cannot afford to be over confident. If it's still 1-1 after 90 minutes, it will go into extra time and anything can happen.

For fans of the Azzurri it is hard to ignore, let alone forget, the San Paolo Stadium. While the city will no doubt welcome the team with open arms- as it always does- the 1990 World Cup will serve as a reminder of the unpredictability of football.

Italy were knocked out seven years ago by Argentina in the semis of the World Cup by the dreaded penalty shoot out after the scores were locked at 1-1 after extra time. Italy were Cup favourites and up to that point had yet to concede a goal! Naples was certainly Italy's 'jinx' in 1990.

But then again Argentina had a certain Diego Maradona in their line-up, who knew a little about "Napoli" ... a benefit Russia do not have.

****

AC Milan can't take a trick these days. After their 2-1 loss at home to Lecce two weeks ago, when they conceded two penalties in the space of a minute, they have now paid the penalty for their indiscretions and over zealous protesting at the referee.

Against Sampdoria, coach Fabio Capello watched from the grandstands, along with defender Alessandro Costacurta, both having being suspended for one week. Dejan Savicevic also received a two week suspension while Capello was also fined $4,000 and the club received a fine of $20,000.

CHELSEA'S VIALLI

****

Fans of Juventus must be amazed at the team's new outfit this season. Gone are the famous black and white vertical stripes which have been replaced by more rounded stripes, but at least the colours have remained the same.

As for the shorts, they have changed from white to black. It makes Juventus almost look like Udinese. One can argue changes are needed on marketing principles, but it still leaves the question of tradition.

With one of the world's largest electrical and sound companies as their major sponsor, it would be fair to say the Yen counts more than tradition.

****

Given AC Milan's current predicament, chock full of superstars but struggling to win games, it takes me back to the 1982/83 season. That year Roma won the Scudetto and Juve finished a distant second.

Juventus started the season as clear favourites, especially as the had won the previous two championships and their team was not too bad at all. The line-up basically was: Zoff, Gentile, Cabrini, Furino, Brio, Scirea, Bettega, Tardelli, Rossi, Platini and Boniek.

The squad also included internationals such as Bonini, Marocchino and Galderisi. In addition, six players, namely Zoff, Gentile, Cabrini, Scirea, Tardelli and Rossi had played in every game in the previous summer's successful World Cup team.

Which just goes to prove that even the greatest of squads may not win the championship. Fans of AC Milan and Fabio Capello take heart!

MEDITERRANEAN MURMERS

BY ANDREW AKRATOS

Well it finally happened. All season (eight weeks now) the big boys have been waiting for Ionikos' bubble to burst and when it did, who would have dreamt that the leaders' aura of invincibility would be shattered by another of the minnows? In the last few months AEK have been humbled and OFI shattered but little Skoda Xanthi proved to be the straw that broke the camel's back.

After six hundred and thirty four minutes of clean sheets, Ionikos were well and truly demoralised by a 4-2 scoreline that did not tell the true tale of the hiding the leaders received. On paper it appeared an easy game, probably as much as three goals in Ionikos' favour, but from the opening whistle Xanthi got stuck in, and didn't let go till Ionikos' new found reputation lay in bleeding tatters on the hallowed pitch in Thrace.

Ionokos still maintains first place on goal difference from Panathinaikos, which is beginning to flex its collective muscle following an easy 3-0 rout of OFI. OFI's world is rapidly crumbling and after a series of ordinary results at home must be looking to Europe for better things. But then again Auxerre might have a thing or two to say about that...

AEK gave an unsteady performance away to Paniliakos after being 2-0 down 35 minutes in but came out breathing fire after the break and ran out 4-2 winners in the end against a team that seems to be preparing for another relegation battle. Still, championships are won by teams that win matches despite not playing well, and, if anything, AEK displayed new found steel that bodes well for a thrilling championship race against an emerging Panathinaikos and an occasionally indifferent Olympiakos, that had an easy time of it at home smashing Kalamata 3-0.

One of the less stellar names in the league is Panahaiki from Greece's second largest city, Patras. In recent years they seem to be either battling relegation or gaining promotion and this year has been no different. But with a second win on the trot, it may be the beginning of a run that will see them having a mid-table finish rather than a life or death battle at the end...

The weekend results:

Apollon	1	Ethnikos	0
Xanthi	4	Ionikos	2
Paniliakos	2	AEK	4
Olympiakos	3	Kalamata	0
OFI	0	PAO	3
PAOK	2	Iraklis	2

Panionios - Athinaikos Game abandoned
Prodeftiki v Kavala played Monday night

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Ionikos	8	7	0	1	19	4	21
PAO	8	7	0	1	17	3	21
AEK	8	6	1	1	14	7	19
Olympiakos	8	6	0	2	21	8	18
Apollon	8	5	1	2	10	8	16
Iraklis	8	4	2	2	10	7	14
Xanthi	8	4	2	2	18	15	14
PAOK	8	3	4	1	14	9	13
Panionios	8	3	1	4	9	11	10
Paniliakos	8	3	0	5	12	16	9
Panahaiki	8	3	0	5	7	14	9
Prodeftiki	7	2	2	3	10	14	8
OFI	8	2	2	4	11	19	8
Veria	8	2	1	5	10	15	7
Ethnikos	8	2	0	6	4	10	6
Kavala	7	1	1	5	8	16	4
Athenaikos	8	1	1	6	6	15	4
Kalamata	8	0	2	6	2	13	2

●●●●●

It's Euro soccer week once again and unfortunately it's hard to find something good to smile about these days. All Greek teams are facing an ignominious exit from Europe, all except for AEK of course, which makes it all so much harder for fans of Greek soccer to bear, especially after such a great start to the season.

In the Champions' League, Olympiakos are coming off a couple of five goal hidings away to Rosenborg and Real Madrid. This time they're at home to Real, but it will be a huge ask to expect a reversal from the earlier result in Madrid, but in front of its home fans Olympiakos are expected to at least fight grimly till the finish and a draw may be the most probable result.

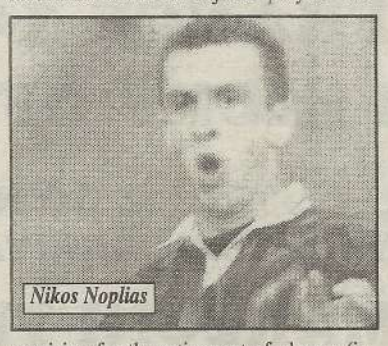
It's also "return" legs in the UEFA Cup and PAOK host Atletico Madrid which hammered five past them a fortnight ago. These days PAOK is having an ordinary run in the domestic league, and coming off a 3-0 home defeat over the weekend, it's hard to see them getting a result against the Spaniards. Greek soccer fans will, however, be praying for a miracle.

OFI probably has the best chance to reverse a 3-1 scoreline against Auxerre, especially since it was achieved under very difficult circumstances. OFI's results at home haven't been setting the world alight but with pride (and a place in the next round) to play for, the Cretean team will be hard to withstand and an upset could well be on the cards...

Finally AEK, Greece's best hope for European silverware this year, seem set for the next round. Quietly efficient, the team is getting the results that matter and seem to be heading for a showdown with one of Europe's bigger names . Sturm Graz are not the biggest team in Europe and with a 2-0 away lead to lean on, AEK are already looking safe. The team's biggest enemy is complacency, but after the near shock at Paniliakos on the weekend, this should hardly be a problem...

●●●●●

International Nikos Noplias suffered a leg injury during the recent Ionikos-OFI game and will be sidelined for a month, which leads nicely into the latest news emerging from Greece — the question of insurance cover for injured players and provision for the retirement of players (ie: superannuation).



Nikos Noplias

Professional Players Association President, Anthony Anthoniadis, has revealed that moves are underway to revamp the present (inadequate) insurance systems that are in place which directly affect the compensation available to players that suffer some sort of financial loss through injuries sustained in the course of a match (medical costs, loss of wages etc.).

A new innovation that will be introduced is the wide scale insurance of all professional players against premature career ending injuries.

The possibile creation of a unified superannuation fund is also being examined with a view to assisting players prepare for their financial life after football. Priority will be given to career or vocational courses concentrating on alternate employment opportunities outside football.

●●●●●

Not content with merely resigning their superstars on new, long-term contracts, AEK's cheque book has tempted Stellios Manolas back to Nikos Goumas (New Philadelphia) Stadium, as well as Icelandic international Angaar Geradsson.

But the money men are interested in "larger fish" to whit, something English. With injury to winger Chris Kostis (broken leg), AEK are looking for a long-term replacement and it appears that their first choice is none other than unsettled Blackburn Rovers discard.... Geogios Donis!

He is currently in Athens discussing the possibility of a move to the club and if sources are to believed a proposal will be submitted to Rovers in the very near future.

Speculation is rife that there will be a move by the club for one or two others, all currently playing for Rangers in Scotland (also partly owned by AEK owners ENIC).

●●●●●

Well, well, well ... new happenings in the world according to Michael Trohanas.

Ex-AEK owner Trohanas seems hellbent to walk where angels fear to tread. It's an open secret that he is on the prowl for a new club after off-loading AEK to ENIC for a tidy sum recently and it seems he has set his sights on ... Aris.

Scarcely a week ago Aris hit the news when Action Advertising pulled out of negotiations to acquire 51% of the club due to the chaotic state of the club's financial affairs.

Maverick Trohanas has spoken to club officials and seems prepared to buy the club and assume its huge debts. While he himself is playing cat-and-mouse with the media over the affair, during the week he publicly "gave" $25,000 as a playing bonus to Aris players after they secured a hard fought 1-0 away win over Kallithea last weekend.

The irrepressible Michael Trohanas

No doubt about it, Mr Trohanas lives by the old axiom "Money talks, b....t walks". Stay tuned for the further adventures of the denizens in Trohanas' World...

●●●●●

Next weekend: Kalamata-Veria; Kavala-Olympiakos; Ethinks-Panahaiki; Iraklis-Prodevtiki; Athinaikos-Apollon, Ionikos-PAOK; AEK-Panonios; Panathinaikos-Xanthi; OFI-Paneliakos.

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World Cup Update...

EURO ZONE

Ireland 1 Belgium 1

Belgium, composed and authoritative, held Ireland to a 1-1 draw in the first leg of their World Cup play-off.

Belgium now heads for the return leg in Brussels as favourites to qualify for the finals in France next year, thanks largely to an outstanding individual goal from Luc Nilis who powered the ball past Shay Given from the edge of the box after 30 minutes.

Denis Irwin opened the scoring for Ireland with a 25-metre free-kick after only seven minutes, but Marc Wilmots hit the Irish bar and only some good goalkeeping from Given stopped Belgium adding to their score. Irwin went close to scoring with a free-kick in the dying seconds, but an Irish win would have been rough justice for the visitors.

Scorers:

Ireland: Irwin 7 Belgium: Nilis 30

Hungary 1 Yugoslavia 7

Yugoslavia put on an exhibition of brilliant football as they humiliated Hungary 7-1 to take a large stride towards next year's World Cup finals in France.

The visitors took the lead as early as the second minute of the World Cup European Zone qualifying play-off first leg when Branko Brnovic lobbed Hungarian keeper Szabolcs Safar from close range.

Yugoslavia were three goals up inside 10 minutes thanks to goals from Miroslav Djukic and a stunning drive from Dejan Savicevic. Two goals from Predrag Mijatovic in the 26th and 41st minutes gave the visitors a five-goal lead at the break.

Mijatovic completed his hat-trick in the 51st minute and substitute Szavo Milosevic made it seven in the 63rd.

Bela Illes scored a consolation goal for Hungary two minutes from time.

Scorers:

Hungary: Bela Illes 89

Yugoslavia: Branko Brnovic 2, Miroslav Djukic 6, Dejan Savicevic 10, Predrag Mijatovic 26, 41, 51, Szavo Milosevic 63.

Russia 1 Italy 1

Christian Vieri became the first Italian ever to score for his country in Russia to give Italy a major boost in their quest to reach next year's World Cup finals.

But the Real Madrid striker's solo effort in the 49th minute of the first leg play-off was cancelled out within two minutes, unfortunately, by team mate Cannavaro.

Vieri pounced on a long through ball from Demetrio Albertini and, as Russian defender Akhrik Tsveiba slipped on the snowy pitch, he steered the ball past goalkeeper Sergei Ovchinnikov.

Italy had played the Soviet Union in Moscow three times since 1963 and had never scored. Vieri's away goal will count double, in the event of a draw, on aggregate after the second leg in Naples on Nov. 15.

CAN ITALY EMULATE THE SUCCESS OF ITALY 82?

Scorers:

Russia: Cannavaro 52og Italy: Vieri 49

Croatia 2 Ukraine 0

Goals in either half from Slaven Bilic and Goran Vlaovic handed Croatia the initiative when they beat Ukraine 2-0 in their World Cup play-off first leg tie.

After a tense opening, Everton central defender Bilic struck in the 11th minute before Valencia's Vlaovic sealed the win on the night four minutes after the break to calm the home fans' nerves.

Croatia thereafter controlled the pace as they chose the cautious approach and sat on their lead as the final minutes ticked away.

Ukraine clearly missed suspended Dynamo Kiev stars midfielder Yury Kalitvintsev and striker Andrei Shevchenko as they failed to impose themselves.

The Ukrainians must now overhaul the deficit in Kiev in the return leg on November 15 if they are to advance to next year's finals in France.

Scorers:

Croatia: Bilic 11, Vlaovic 49

ASIAN ZONE

Japan resurrected their World Cup qualification hopes on Saturday with a stunning 2-0 victory over runaway Group B leaders South Korea in Seoul.

The victory lifted Japan over the UAE into second place with two points more than their Arab rivals, who have a match in hand.

Midfielder Hiroshi Nanami got Japan off to the perfect start with a goal after two minutes.South Korea were missing suspended key defender Hong Myung-bo but there was little Korea could do to prevent Japan stretching their lead with a 37th minute volley from Brazilian-born Wagner Lopes.

Japan have been under pressure to win a ticket to France as they are desperate to avoid the stigma of staging a World Cup without ever having qualified for one.

Group A

Iran	0	Kuwait	0
China	2	Qatar	3

	P	F	A	P
Iran	7	13	6	12
Saudi Arabia	6	6	5	10
Kuwait	7	7	7	8
China	6	9	13	7
Qatar	6	5	9	7

Remaining matches: Nov 6Saudi Arabia v China, Nov 7 Qatar v Iran; Nov 12 China v Kuwait & Qatar v Saudi Arabia

Group B

South Korea	0	Japan	2
UAE	0	Uzbekistan	0

	P	F	A	P
South Korea	7	16	6	16
Japan	7	12	8	10
UAE	6	8	9	9
Uzbekistan	7	13	18	6
Kazakhstan	7	6	14	6

Remaining Matches: Nov 8 Japan v Kazakhstan; Nov 9 UAE v South Korea.

CONCAF

Mexico qualified for next year's World Cup finals in France despite being held to a 0-0 draw by the United States in their CONCACAF Zone qualifying match on Sunday.

Cheered on by a crowd of 110,000, chanting "Ole, Ole", the Mexicans got the point they needed to be certain of qualifying.

The Americans played with 10 men from the 31st minute onwards after Jeff Agoos was sent off for elbowing Mexican Pavel Pardo.

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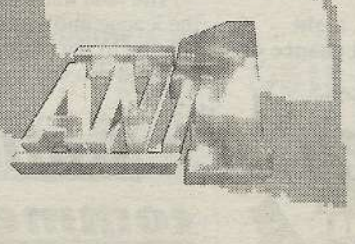


UK TALK

WITH MICKY BROCK

United Get Warning

MANCHESTER UNITED fans have been warned of a police blitz this week if they turn up for the Champions' League clash with Feyenoord either drunk or without tickets.

A delegation of high-ranking Rotterdam police who attended Old Trafford for talks are determined to avoid the scenes witnessed during England's World Cup decider against Italy.

We're NOT Racist

LES FERDINAND

EVERTON STRONGLY denied allegations by England striker Les Ferdinand that Goodison Park is a breeding ground for racism.

In his new auto-biography, 'Sir Les' (which we'll review in the next couple of weeks), the Tottenham forward claims he has always suffered racial abuse at the ground.

Everton secretary Michael Dunford said: "Any problems which might still exist here are no worse than at any other club."

Silenzi Ordered Back

ANDY SILENZI

NOTTINGHAM FOREST boss Dave Bassett is set to order Italian flop Andy Silenzi back to the City Ground.

The striker is still on Forest's wage-book even though he has spent the last six months in Italy looking for a new club.

Bassett said: "I don't see why he should stay on in Italy while we are paying him."

James' Lifeline

DAVID JAMES was last night handed an unexpected chance of an Anfield reprieve when Liverpool found that their $4:5 million bid for United States' goalkeeper Brad Friedel will be delayed for at least three matches.

Because of a hand injury suffered by American first-choice Kasey Keller of Leicester, it means Friedel is required for World Cup matches.

Hartson Backs Down

A CONTRITE John Hartson will today make an apology to the referee he called 'a disgrace' - but his change of heart is unlikely to get him off the hook with the FA.

This comes after statements by the player that in the cold light of day, he still felt firmly about his comments and would not retract them under any circumstances as he believed they were truthful in his opinion.

Strange how some things turn out? West Ham have also completed the $700,000 signing of striker Samassi Abou 24, from Cannes. Born in the Ivory Coast, he has played for the French U/21 side and appeared likely to be included in the West Ham squad for last night's home game against Crystal Palace.

Brolin Bites Back

FORMER LEEDS misfit Tomas Brolin has slammed ex-boss Howard Wilkinson - the man who brought him to the club for a record $8.5 million.

Sweden forward Brolin said: "I didn't trust him and it's hard for a player to play for a coach he does not respect."

Bradford manager Chris Kamara tried, in vain, to keep Brolin in Yorkshire but the player insisted he wanted a return to top-level European club competition.

Hearts Can Do It

HEARTS DEFENDER Neil Pointon insisted that his poor relations of the Premier League title race have the staying power to shame the multi-million-dollar Old Firm.

"Man United haven't spent that much money and they are right up there in the league," said Pointon. "We are in the same boat. Man United have the young lads like us, playing better every season and they know what's needed of them.

"If those lads here at Hearts can carry on progressing, they can take over from the Dave McPhersons and John Robertsons. It's looking very good for the future.

"The fans wanted to see us top of the league and sometimes it gets a little bit to the players. We want it as well and you can get too hyped up."

Scotland commended

SCOTLAND MANAGER Craig Brown and his players were commended for securing their place in France 98.

National coach Brown has been named Manager of the Month for October, the third occasion he has been offered the award, for guiding Scotland to the World Cup finals.

But for the first time his team's contribution has also been marked with the entire squad sharing the Player of the Month award.

Give Us a Go

FORMER ENGLAND great Bobby Charlton arrived in Costa Rica at the head of a delegation seeking support for England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup.

The high-level delegation, which will put England's case before senior Costa Rican government and sporting officials, includes Minister for Sport Tony Banks as well as FA President Graham Kelly.

Significantly, delegation will also meet Costa Rican FIFA executive committee member Isaac Sasso, whose support they hope to enlist within soccer's world governing body.

Turn It Up!

ARSENAL MIDFIELDER Emmanuel Petit was charged with misconduct by the Football Association following his sending-off against Aston Villa in last weeks 0-0 draw at Highbury.

The Frenchman was given a red card after allegedly pushing referee Paul Durkin in the second-half of the goalless clash. Petit had protested to Durkin after believing his shot had been handled in the penalty area by Villa central defender Ugo Ehiogu.

He was given 14 days to respond to the charge and decide if he will ask for a personal hearing.

Petit said: "I was very surprised when I was given the red card. Refereeing is different in this country from France."

Hooligan Hall Of Shame

POLICE WHO issued a 'gallery of shame' to identify football hooligans said they had been flooded with calls identifying the men responsible for violence at a Premiership clash.

West Yorkshire police published 10 pictures of men thought to be part of a gang of 100 Leeds United fans who orchestrated attacks on fans of bitter rivals Manchester United before and after a match here in September.

The move sparked a flurry of calls to police in Leeds, and eight of the ten men have been identified.

A spokeswoman said: "We have had dozens and dozens of calls and we are delighted with the response. All the names are now being checked."

Three police officers were injured during the trouble, which involved fighting and missiles, including bricks and bottles, being thrown.

Twenty-one arrests were made on the day, and another seven have been made since.

THE BOOK REVIEW

Capital Punishment

This is the third in a trilogy of books covering the movements of the hooligan culture of UK football fans.

The authors, Dougie and Eddie Brimson, have both been extremely active in the Watford and England 'firms' and both 'know the score' but unlike the previous two editions, this looks in particular at the London scene and, in particular, those of West Ham, Chelsea and Millwall, although each and every side is mentioned from England's largest city.

As usual, it features many first hand accounts from the 'top boys' and does not muck about with mixed metaphors and the like, strong features on the ICF, Headhunters and Bushwhackers will bear testament to that, and it gives a chilling insight into what running with the mob is all about.

Though the book does NOT glorify the violence, it does explain why it happens and how it started and describes that the problems faced by the FA, Police and the clubs themselves have never been a case of sporadic fighting breaking out but well organised mayhem!

The Brimson boys have two other books on the subject available, 'Everywhere We Go' (a study of the 'firms' and accounts of what happen) and 'England, my England' (covering international matches away and at home). This one completes the set.

Though no-one in their right mind can condone this style of behaviour, it makes for compelling reading and for anyone who grew up in the 'bad old days' it proves to be very accurate, frighteningly accurate!

Hooliganism has never gone away, merely it finds alternative avenues but the Brimson boys attempt to offer solutions on how the authorities can combat and finally erase the problem, although not as prevalent these days as in the past.

Published by Headline Books, as ever it's not available directly in Australia but quote the following to your local bookshop and they should be able to order it in for you: ISBN NUMBER 0-7472-5713-2.

Graphic, realistic, frightening - 9/10

English Disease?

SCOTTISH PREMIER division outfit Motherwell have imposed a life ban on a supporter who assaulted Aberdeen keeper Jim Leighton during their Premier division clash at Fir Park.

The Motherwell fan pleaded guilty to the assault on the veteran Scotland international.

Motherwell director Alan Dick said: "As he has now appeared in court and pleaded guilty we can confirm this action without waiting for sentence to be passed. All our turnstile operators will be given his photograph," he added.

The 'English Disease' in Scotland? Try telling one of these lads they're English and see what happens!

We Don't Want Him!

GRAEME SOUNESS, widely touted to return to Rangers for a second spell as manager, is not the man to succeed Walter Smith at the end of the season, according to fans' spokesman John Macmillan.

Macmillan, general secretary of the Rangers Supporters Association, believes the nine-in-a-row Scottish champions will have to look outside Britain for a successor.

He also feels it would be inappropriate for Souness, now employed in an advisory capacity at Italian outfit Torino, to head back to Ibrox for a second term as manager.

Macmillan said: "David Murray (Rangers chairman) commented when Souness decided to join Liverpool he was making the biggest mistake of his life.

"I tend to agree with that and I am not convinced bringing Souness back would be the right move. I have an open mind about who should succeed Walter, as I am sure most of the supporters have.

"But at the moment I cannot see anyone in the UK being named in his place, there are no big names available.

"Celtic have brought in a Dutchman, Wim Jansen, and he seems to have turned things around. All credit to him. Maybe it goes to show that you don't need to be a household name to get the right results.

"Rangers horizons stretch far beyond Scotland now. The new manager will be expected to maintain our success at home and improve our record abroad."

GRAEME SOUNESS

Smith, who replaced Souness as manager in 1991 when the former Scotland star left for Liverpool, announced this week that he will leave the hot-seat in the summer.

By STUART JONES

Weird & Wonderful

1939-1940

Under the shadow of war the 1939/40 season kicked off. Each team had played three games when the pressure on football from the public became too strong and the League was called off (at the time Blackpool were on top of Division One). The teams returned in 1946 in a regionalised league format.

The crowds were apathetic towards football at this stage and it took four weeks before there was an attendance of five figures, which was 12,000 when Norwich drew at home to Arsenal. There was also to be no FA Cup competition.

The use of guest players was again allowed, as it was in the Great War. Many players played for teams close to their army base although some clubs held their registration and demanded their new clubs insure the players involved. This led to guest players playing under pseudonyms, and thus many great players' war time clubs are unknown to the football fan today.

Six clubs did not participate in the war time league season 1939-40: Aston Villa, Derby County, Exeter City, Gateshead, Ipswich Town and Sunderland.

The league was split into four south divisions (A, B, C, D) and a South West, Midland, East Midlands, West, North West and North East sections.

All the sections saw the participants play each other twice, except the Midlands and South West where they played each other four times.

London side defeating Fulham 4-3 and Blackburn triumphing 1-0 over Newcastle.

The final was played in front of 42, 399 people and was played in the week of the evacuation of Dunkirk. A Sam Small goal for West ham was the only goal of the match, thus West Ham were the inaugural winners of the Cup.

The Southern League had a postponement of two months after football had been banned in September 1939. Once the Football League was re-established, the Southern League also came back in. Membership had been decimated and there were now two sections, the East with five members and the West with eight.

Chelmsford City were top of the East, while Lovells Athletic won the West. The play-off was drawn 3-3, therefore the title was shared.

In the Southern League Cup, Worcester City defeated Chelmsford City 7-3 on aggregate in the final. The Southern League was disbanded until 1945/46. Teams like Dartford played in the localised Kent District league.

One of the strangest offers Yeovil were to get during the break from the war was from an American officer who offered to level the playing field if they could play baseball there, an offer Yeovil declined.

In Scotland, after just five games in the top flight, and four in Division B, the whole thing was called off. Just to prove things don't change, Rangers were on top even then! (the Scottish FA Cup was not run either).

Rangers players sporting the latest pre-war 'fitba' fashion

Winter was particularly harsh this season, and to complicate matters further, and after an extension to the league, champions were Arsenal, QPR, Tottenham, Crystal Palace, Plymouth, Wolves, Chesterfield, Stoke, Bury and Huddersfield respectively.

South C and D competitions had been arranged by clubs to make up for the loss of fixtures.

Also, on April 13, 1940 a wartime Cup competition was kicked off. After 136 games (five rounds in all) all played within a nine week period, Blackburn played West Ham in the Final.

The semis had been close affairs with the

Rangers won the new Western section of the wartime league, eight points clear of Queen of the South, meanwhile Celtic finished fourth from the bottom!

Falkirk won the East and North East section and Rangers defeated Falkirk 2-1 in the title decider. Connor (Queen of the South) was leading goal scorer this season with 30 goals.

In the Scottish War Cup Final, Rangers defeated Dundee United 1-0 with a goal from Smith, hence doing a wartime double. The attendance was around 75,000 at Hampden Park.

Around Europe the Champions were:

Austria-	SK Rapid Wien
Belgium-	No League
Bulgaria-	(SK Sofia (Cup- FK 13 Sofia)
France -	No League (Cup- Racing Club Paris)
Germany-	FC Shalke 04 (Cup- Dresden SC)
Holland-	Feyenoord
Italy-	AS Ambrosiana "Inter" (Cup- AC Fiorentina)
Poland-	No League
Portugal-	FC Porto (Cup- Benfica)
Romania-	Venus Bucuresti (Cup- Rapid Bucuresti_
Russia-	Dynamo Moskva
Spain-	Athletico Aviacion de Madrid (Cup- RCD Espanol)
Sweden-	IF Elfsborg
Switzerland-	Servette FC Geneve (Cup- Grasshopper Club-Zurich)

England Final Tables

South A

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Arsenal	18	13	1	4	62	22	30
West Ham	18	12	5	1	57	33	25
Millwall	18	8	5	5	46	38	21
Watford	18	9	6	3	44	38	21
Norwich	18	7	5	6	41	36	20
Charlton	18	8	9	1	61	58	17
Crystal Palace	18	5	10	3	39	56	13
Clapton Orient	18	5	10	3	28	60	13
Tottenham	18	5	11	2	37	43	12
Southend	18	4	14	0	30	61	8

South B

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
QPR	18	12	4	2	49	26	26
B'mouth & BA	18	11	5	2	52	37	24
Chelsea	18	9	4	5	43	37	24
Reading	18	10	6	2	47	42	22
Fulham	18	7	7	4	42	41	18
Portsmouth	18	7	9	2	37	42	16
Aldershot	18	5	9	4	38	49	14
Brighton & HA	18	5	12	1	42	53	11
Southampton	18	4	14	0	41	63	8

South C

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Tottenham	18	11	3	4	43	30	26
West Ham	18	10	4	4	53	28	24
Arsenal	18	9	4	5	41	26	23
Brentford	18	8	6	4	42	34	20
Millwall	19	7	6	5	36	30	19
Charlton	18	7	7	4	39	56	18
Fulham	18	8	9	1	38	42	17
Southampton	18	5	10	3	28	55	13
Chelsea	18	4	11	3	33	53	11
Portsmouth	18	3	12	3	26	45	9

South D

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Crystal Palace	18	13	4	1	63	30	27
QPR	18	10	5	3	38	28	23
Watford	18	7	4	7	41	29	21
Southend	18	8	7	3	41	37	19
Aldershot	18	7	8	3	38	36	17
Clapton Orient	18	7	8	3	33	45	17
*Norwich	17	6	7	4	31	31	16
*B'Mouth & BA	17	7	8	2	38	40	16
Reading	18	6	10	2	31	42	14
Brighton & HA	18	2	12	4	30	65	8

*Match Bornemouth v Norwich not played in season.

South West

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Plymouth	28	16	8	4	72	41	36
Torquay	28	14	8	6	73	62	34
Bristol R	28	9	9	10	62	55	28
Newport	28	12	12	4	70	63	28
Swindon	28	10	10	8	66	63	28
Swansea	28	10	12	6	54	60	26
Cardiff	28	6	9	13	45	63	25
Bristol C	28	7	16	5	57	92	19

Midlands

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Wolves	28	19	6	3	76	44	41
WBA	28	18	6	4	87	51	40
Birmingham	28	12	11	5	56	60	29
Coventry	28	13	12	3	68	57	29
Luton	28	10	14	4	76	88	24
Northampton	28	7	13	8	48	59	22
Leicester	28	7	15	6	51	71	20
Walsall	28	7	16	5	57	92	19

East Midlands

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Chesterfield	20	14	4	2	69	23	30
Seffield Utd	20	12	7	1	46	34	25
Barnsley	20	10	5	5	43	39	25
Grimsby	20	10	8	2	40	44	42
Mansfied	20	9	8	3	49	48	21
Doncaster	20	7	9	4	37	45	18
Lincoln	20	9	11	0	42	53	18
Rotherham	20	7	9	4	24	42	18
Sheffield Wed	20	5	10	5	33	42	15
Nottingham F	20	5	11	4	37	43	14
Notts County	20	6	12	2	40	57	14

West

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Stoke	22	13	4	5	57	41	31
Liverpool	22	12	5	5	66	40	29
Everton	22	12	6	4	64	33	28
Man Utd	22	14	8	0	74	41	28
Man City	22	12	6	4	73	41	28
Wrexham	22	10	7	5	45	50	25
New Brighton	22	10	9	3	55	52	23
Port Vale	22	10	10	2	52	56	22
Chester	22	7	10	5	40	51	19
Crewe	22	6	15	1	44	79	13
Stockport	22	4	15	3	45	79	11
Tranmere	22	2	17	3	41	93	7

North West

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Bury	22	16	4	2	64	30	34
Preston	22	15	5	2	63	27	32
Blackpool	22	13	3	6	75	36	32
Bolton	22	13	5	4	55	30	30
Oldham	22	11	9	2	55	61	24
Burnley	22	9	8	5	48	43	23
Barrow	22	8	10	4	54	57	20
Blackburn	22	7	11	4	37	40	18
Rochdale	22	5	12	5	38	58	15
Southport	22	5	13	4	34	62	14
Carlisle	22	4	14	4	38	68	12
Accrington	22	2	14	6	31	78	10

North East

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Huddersfield	20	15	1	4	54	22	34
Newcastle	20	12	7	1	59	42	25
*Bradford PA	19	10	7	2	47	38	22
Middlesborough	20	9	7	4	49	42	22
*Leeds	18	9	6	3	36	27	21
*Bradford C	19	8	7	4	41	37	20
Hull	20	8	11	1	35	41	17
York	20	8	11	1	36	51	17
*Darlington	19	6	10	3	44	56	15
Hartlepool	20	6	13	1	27	47	13
*Halifax	10	3	14	2	28	53	8

*Bradford PA v Darlington; Leeds v Halifax; Bradford C v Leeds- not played.

Southern League Eastern Section

Chelmsford City 10, Guildford City 9, Tunbridge Wells Rangers 7, Dartford 5, Norwich City Res 5.

Southern League Western Section

Lovells Athletic 23, Worcester City 20, Hereford United 16, Yeovil & Petters United 16, Gloucester City 10, Barry 9, Cheltenham Town 8, Bath City 8

Scotland

West

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Rangers	30	22	4	8	72	36	48
Q of S	30	17	7	6	77	55	40
Hamilton	30	15	7	8	78	55	38
Motherwell	30	15	7	8	64	56	38
Morton	30	14	11	5	64	46	33
Albion	30	15	13	2	62	60	32
Clyde	30	11	10	9	68	51	31
Kilmarnock	30	13	12	5	63	63	31
Airdrie	30	14	14	2	63	61	30
St. Mirren	30	11	15	4	59	66	26
Partick	30	10	14	6	57	74	26
Third Lanark	30	10	15	5	53	78	25
Celtic	30	9	15	6	55	61	24
Queens Park	30	7	16	7	55	82	21
Ayr	30	7	18	5	50	66	19
Dumbarton	30	7	19	4	48	78	18

East and North East

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Falkirk	28	19	4	5	97	47	43
Hearts	28	17	7	4	101	64	38
Dunfermline	28	18	8	2	77	55	38
Aberdeen	28	15	9	4	78	49	34
St. Johnstone	28	12	8	8	81	69	32
Dundee	28	11	10	7	69	61	29
Alloa	28	12	12	4	54	59	28
Hibernian	28	11	12	5	78	65	27
Dundee Utd	28	12	14	2	66	73	26
East Fife	28	11	14	3	78	87	25
Raith	28	10	15	3	66	80	23
Kings Park	28	9	15	4	60	83	22
St Bernards	28	8	15	5	44	73	21
Stenhousemuir	28	7	18	3	50	93	17
Arbroath	28	6	17	5	44	85	17
Cowdenbeath	15	7	1	7	38	44	15

Cowdenbeath resigned after playing 15 games, their results ignored.

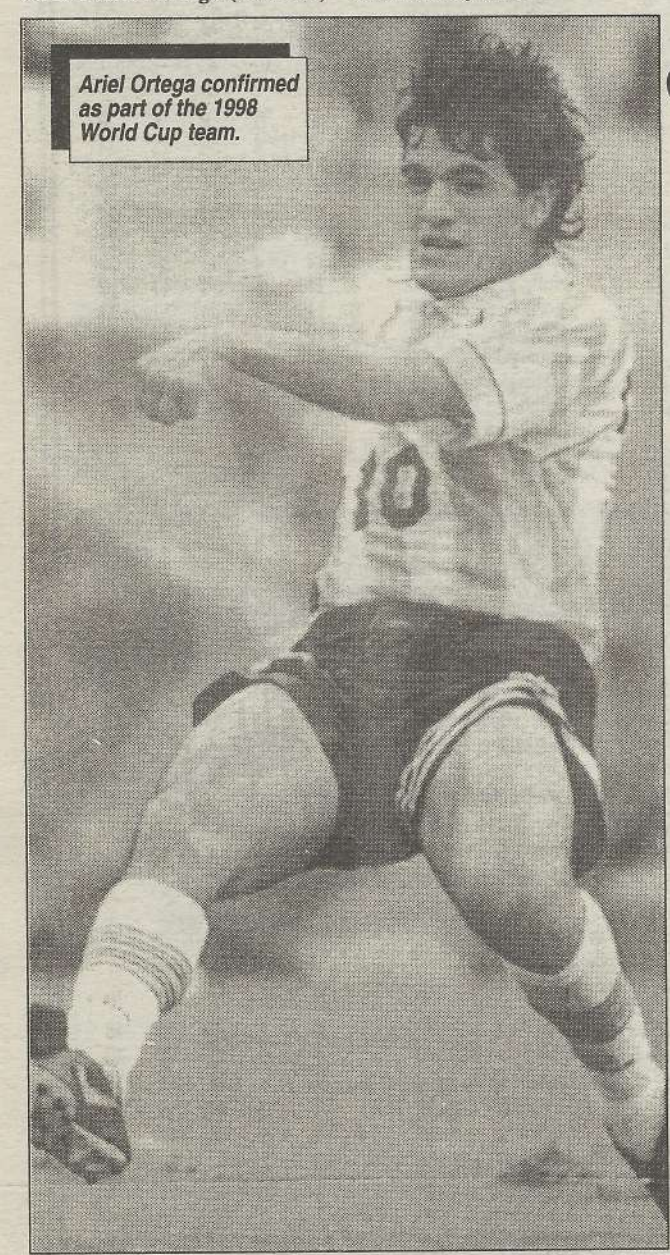
Rangers beat Falkirk 2-1 in the deciding game.

SOUTH AMERICA

— Compiled by Mario Etchart —

Passarella confirms the magnificent seven!

Argentine national coach, Daniel Passarella, confirmed seven players as part of the squad that will compete in the 1998 World Cup to be held in France. Defender Roberto Ayala (Napoli, Italy), striker Ariel Ortega (Valencia, Spain), midfielder Marcelo Gallardo (River Plate, Argentina), midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron (Sampdoria, Italy), defender Jose Chamot (Lazio, Italy), and striker Claudio Lopez (Valencia, Spain) are the lucky ones.



Ariel Ortega confirmed as part of the 1998 World Cup team.

THE 'A' TEAM

Goalkeeper: Carlos Roa
Defenders: Javier Zanetti, Roberto Ayala, Roberto Sensini, Jose Chamot.
Midfielders: Juan Veron, Matias Almeyda, Diego Simeone.
Strikers: Abel Balbo, Hernan Crespo, Gabriel Batistuta.

THE 'B' TEAM

Goalkeeper: German Burgos
Defenders: Pablo Paz, Fernando Caceres, Mauricio Pochettino, Claudio Schurrer
Midfielders: Morigi, Fernando Redondo, Gustavo Lopez.
Strikers: Claudio Lopez, Ariel Ortega, Juan Esnalder.

Previously, Passarella announced that Fiorentina's prolific scorer, Gabriel Batistuta, will be part of the Argentine squad. Although Batistuta wasn't considered for the last games in the South American World Cup qualifying rounds, the national coach said that the star striker is assured of a place in his team.

In the goalkeepers' department, the certainties are Carlos Roa (Lanus) and German Burgos (River Plate).

According to the prestigious Argentine sports magazine "El Grafico", Passarella, if he decides to include Redondo, could have two very powerful teams.

BOCA WINS ARGENTINE DERBY...

Boca Juniors, the most popular club in Argentina, defeated arch-rival River Plate in the biggest derby in Argentine football, and is now the new leader of the national second phase league.

River Plate dominated for most of the first half and went 1-0 ahead when midfielder Sergio Berti combined with Chilean Marcelo Salas and scored with a perfect drive in the 40th minute.

But in the last 45 minutes Boca, with more character and determination than good football, overcame their more classy opponent and gained an important victory.

Midfielder Julio Toresani, in the 47th minute, with a powerful shot and striker Martin Palermo, who connected with a header from Peruvian international defender Nolberto Solano, in the 67th, scored for Boca Juniors.

Maradona, who played only the first half and barely made an impression, and was replaced in the second half by Roman Riquelme, while former international striker Claudio Caniggia came on in the second period. Another absentee, because of injury, was River Plate's captain Enzo Francescoli.

In other games for the Argentine league, Velez Sarsfield thrashed Independiente 5-2, Racing beat Ferro Carril Oeste 3-0, San Lorenzo defeated Estudiantes de La Plata 3-2, while Rosario Central won by 2 goals to 0 against Gimnasia y Tiro Salta, and Newell's Old Boys went 1-0 down against Gimnasia y Esgrima Jujuy. Lanus and Union drew 3-3.

After ten rounds Boca leads with 24 points, followed by River Plate and Rosario both with 22, Velez Sasrfield, San Lorenzo and Gimnasia y Esgrima La PLata with 18, Independiente 17, Estudiantes and Argentinos Juniors 16, Ferro and Colon 12, Espanol 11, Gimnasia Jujuy 10, Lanus 9, Racing and Platense 8, Gimnasia y Tiro Salta 7, Newell's Old Boys 6, Union 5 and Huracan 2.

URUGUAYAN LEAGUE WRAP
Penarol in Hot Pursuit

With only one round to go, the Uruguayan league second phase is hotting up after Nacional's 1-0 victory over Defensor Sporting and Penarol's dramatic 4-3 win against Cerro.

After the results, Defensor Sporting lead with 21 points, followed by Penarol with 20 and River Plate with 19 — who are the only clubs who could win the tournament.

Other results:
Wanderers 1 Danubio 0, Liverpool 2 Racing 0, Rentistas 1 Rampla Juniors 1.
After ten rounds, Defensor Sporting leads with 21 points followed by Penarol with 20, River Plate 19, Liverpool 17, Nacional and Huracan Buceo 15, V Cerro 12, Racing, Rentistas and Wanderers 11, Rampla Juniors 9, Danubio 3

Penarol, the oldest club in Uruguayan football, who won the last four consecutive Uruguayan championships, are looking for the fifth title and needs to win the second phase to decide who is the 1997 Uruguayan champion against arch-rival Nacional, the winner of the first phase.

After its 4-3 victory over Nacional the previous week, Penarol needed to beat Cerro to continue in the race for the championship, and they were 2-0 ahead after 16 minutes, with goals from strikers Luis Romero and Antonio Pacheco. But Cerro came back and levelled the score through goals from Regueiro and Lemos.

Once again, Penarol took the lead in the 59th when Romero, after a defensive rebound, netted with a short drive, and six minutes later the scoreline was levelled again when Gonzalez beat keeper Claudio Flores.

With the scoreboard showing 3-3, and two minutes inside injury time, Pacheco combined with Lima who skirted Cerro's goalkeeper Jonne and, with a soft touch, gave Penarol the precious victory.

SOUTH AMERICAN CLUB WRAP:

BRAZIL
Round 23:
Internacional 4 Flamengo 0, Criciuma 3 Vasco da Gama 4, Portuguesa 1 Goias 2, Atletico Mineiro 3 America 2, Santos 3 Bahia 1, Vitoria 1 Cruzeiro 1, Guarani 0 Juventude 0, Botafogo 0 Parana 0, Palmeiras 5 gremio 1, Coritiba 0 Paranaense 2, Sao Paulo 7 Uniao Sao Joao 1, Sport 2 Bragantino 1.

ECUADOR
Round 17:
Liga Deportiva Universitaria Quito 4 Olmedo 1, Deportivo Quito 0 Aucas 0, Emelec 3 Calvi 2, Barceloan 2 Espoli 0, Nacional 3 Tecnico Universitario 0, Cuenca 2 Quevedo 0

BOLIVIA
Round 11:
Bolivar 4 Oriente Petrolero 2, Real Santa Cruz 0 Chaco Petrolero 0, Destroyers 2 San Jose 1, Wilsterman 0 Independiente 2, Municipal 6 Guabira 2

Standings Group A:
Bolivar 24, Destroyers 18, Chaco Petrolero 17, Oriente Petrolero 12, San Jose and Real Santa Cruz 10.

Group B:
The Strongest 18, Blooming 16, Wilserman 16, Guabira 13, Independiente 12, Municipal 11.

**Bolivar, Destroyers and Chaco Petrolero are the first three teams to qualify for finals of the Bolivian first division national league.

CHILE
Universidad 2 Concepcion 1, Colo Colo 3 Puerto Montt 1, Antofagasta 2 La Serena 1, Union Espanola 0 Palestino 1, Temunco 1 Cobreloa 1, Osorno 4 Huachipato 0, Audax Italiano 1 Santiago Wanderers 0.

PERU
Round 11:
Sport Boys 1 Sporting Cristal 1, Alianza Lima 2 Deportivo Pesquero 1, Galvez 0 Municipal 2, Alianza Atletico Sullana 8 La Loretana 1, Union Minas 2 Melgar 1, Alcides Viigo 1 Cienciano 0

VENEZUELA
Round 13:
Zulia 2 Mineros 1, Tachitra 1 Trujillanos 1, Estudiantes 1 Chacao 1, Llaneros 1 Carabobo 0, Caracas 3 El Vigia 3, Minerven 3 Nacional 1.

STH AMERICAN SUPERCUP
RESULTS AND STANDINGS:

GROUP ONE
Independiente (Argentina) 2 Colo Colo (Chile) 2
Cruzeiro (Brazil 2 Boca Juniors (Argentina) 1
Colo Colo leads with 10 points, followed by Cruzeiro with 9, Independiente 5 and Boca 4
Colo Colo and Cruzeiro qualified for the quarter-finals.

GROUP TWO
Velez Sarsfield (Argentina) 3 Sao Paulo (Brazil) 3
Flamengo (Brazil) 3 Olimpia (Paraguay) 3
Sao Paulo leads with 8 points, followed by Flamengo with 7, Olimpia 6, Velez Sarsfield 5

GROUP THREE
Vasco da Gama (Brazil) 3 Racing (Argentina) 2
Santos (Brazil) 2 River Plate (Argentina) 1
River Plate leads with 12 points, followed by Vasco da Gama with 10, Santos 3, Racing 2
River Plate and Vasco qualified for the quarter-finals.

GROUP FOUR
Atletico Nacional (Colombia) 1 Penarol (Uruguay) 0
Gremio (Brazil) 2 Estudiantes de La Plata (Argentina) 0
Penarol leads with 8 points, followed by Atletico Nacional with 7, Gremio 6 and Estudiantes.

SALAS STAYS .... FOR THE MOMENT

Chilean international striker Marcelo Salas, the second highest scorer in the South American 1998 World Cup qualifying rounds, behind compatriot Ivan Zamorano, will continue his career with Argentine champion River Plate.

The brilliant striker has been insured by River Plate for a reported A$25 million and will receive an annual fee of A$1.25 million.

Two weeks ago a representative from England's Manchester United offered River Plate around the A$23 million mark for him, but the Argentine club decided to retain the player, at least until the end of the 1997 domestic season.

Last year, River Plate paid Chilean First Division club, Universidad de Chile about A$5 million for Salas, after arch-rivals Boca Juniors decided against signing the star forward.

Before moving to River Plate, Marcelo Salas won the Chilean national league with Universidad de Chile two years in a row: 1994 and 1995.

COACHES SHOWN DOOR

Former Argentine international midfielder Jorge Solari was sacked by America of Mexico, the most popular club in the country, after poor results under his management.

Meanwhile, in Peru, Uruguayan tactician Sergio Markarian was sacked by defending champion and Libertadores Cup runner-up Sporting Cristal after its defeat against arch-rival Alianza Lima, a result that leaves the club out of contention for the championship.

WORLD STOP PRESS

IORDANOV DIAGNOSED WITH MS

Sporting Lisbon's Bulgarian international striker Ivaylo Iordanov has been diagnosed as suffering from multiple sclerosis but his career may not be over according to club doctor, Fernando Ferreira.

Iordanov has not played since early September when he complained of pains in his leg shortly before Bulgaria's final World Cup qualifying game against Russia.

He has been with the Lisbon club since 1991 and played for his national side in the 1994 World Cup finals.

ERWIN KOEMAN TO RETIRE

Dutch veteran and Groningen defender Erwin Koeman, brother of former Barcelona star Ronald, will retire at the end of the season.

Koeman, 36, started out at Groningen before joining PSV Eindhoven. He then moved back to Groningen Nouveau before going to Mechelen in Belgium, where he won the Cup Winners Cup in 1988, ironically against Ajax in the final. That same season he and Ronald were in the Dutch squad which won the European championship.

INDONESIAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION GETS SIX-MONTH BAN

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) have slapped a six-month ban on the All Indonesia Football Federation (PSSI) from organising international matches at Jakarta's Senayan Stadium.

The PSSI was also fined a maximum of $11,000 with the Senayan Stadium being classified as a very high risk venue following recent rioting and crowd misbehaviour during the 19th Jakarta Southeast Asian Games football tournament.

At the end of the six-month ban, PSSI will be required to present a guarantee on the safety of teams, officials and spectators at the stadium.

AMMUNIKE TO UNDERGO SURGERY

Nigerian international midfielder Emmanuel Ammunike will have major surgery on his left knee in the next few days and could be out of action for several months, Barcelona club officials have announced.

Club doctors said they detected signs of a degenerative bone problem in the knee several weeks ago but had decided to wait for further results before deciding to operate.

REFEREE LEAVES IN POLICE CAR AFTER GAME

A referee left a Brazilian championship match in a police car for his own protection after being attacked by directors and fans of one of the teams.

Lourival Dias Limaleft the ground between two heavily armed policemen following the attack at the end of the 0-0 draw between Botafogo and Parana in Rio de Janeiro.

When Lima blew the final whistle, Botafogo directors immediately rushed onto the pitch to protest his performance. Around 15 armed police surrounded Lima and led him off the field while directors continued ranting and raving at the beleaguered official.

In the confusion, a Botafogo fan invaded the pitch and attempted to throw a punch at the referee before being dragged away by police.

The referee stayed inside his dressing room for nearly one hour after the match before an angry mob of fans gathered outside the dressing room entrance.

B. MUNICH SECURES LINKE'S SERVICES

Bayern Munich sealed the services of Schalke 04 defender Thomas Linke, who is on the fringe of the German squad, for the 1998/99 season.

The 27-year-old central defender has played with the current UEFA Cup champions since signing from Gelsenkirchen in 1992 and his contract expires at the end of June next year.

HALMSTAD: SWEDISH CHAMPIONS

Halmstad took the Swedish league soccer title with a 3-0 final-round victory over Ljungskile, who are now relegated.

It was Halmstad's first championship in 18 years and the third in their 83-year-history as current Blackburn Rovers manager Roy Hodgson took them to titles in 1976 and 1979.

HAMANN MOVES TO NEUCHATEL

Munich 1860 defender Matthias Hamann has moved to Swiss club Neuchatel after losing confidence in 1860 coach Werner Lorant.

Hamann, whose brother Dietmar plays for rivals Bayern Munich, has been at 1860 since 1995.

PSG TO HOLD MORE TALKS WITH PANTELIC

Paris Saint Germain's Yugoslav international Marko Pantelic, whose attitude has been frowned on by the club, will meet with PSG sporting director Claude Le Roy.

An initial meeting resulted in 19-year old Pantelic being put on the transfer list and being prevented from training with the other professionals.

In PSG's 2-0 win over Lens, he made a rude gesture with his arm to the bench in frustration at not playing as the crowd were calling for him to come on.

He then threw his official PSG coat on to the ground at the entrance to the changing room.

TV MAY KEEP O/T OUT OF MLS

US Major League Soccer (MLS) doesn't yet have enough clout to run past its allotted television time slot and into the wee hours.

That's why MLS commissioner Doug Logan is reluctant to endorse extra time as a way to eliminate drawn matches, considered a blight on the game by the game's purists.

An eight-minute extra time period, which possibly could fit into the two-hour time slot the MLS will probably have next year in its new deal with ABC and ESPN, was one consideration discussed at a meeting of coaches and general managers.

While basking in the glow of last week's sellout crowd of 57,431 for D.C. United's victory in MLS Cup '97 at RFK Stadium, league officials were quick to realise that some changes are needed to reverse this year's 16 percent decline in regular season attendance and 14 percent dip in cable television ratings.

The league will be playing more Thursday and Saturday games next season, a change from this year's Friday - Sunday setup. ESPN may also revive the Thursday night game of the week.

FEYENOORD SACK HAAN

Dutch first division side Feyenoord sacked coach Arie Haan two days after a four-goal thrashing by Ajax Amsterdam.

The defeat, their third in a row, saw them slump to fifth in the league, 13 points behind leaders Ajax. His assistant Geert Meijer takes over in a caretaker capacity.

MONEY MEN WAKE UP TO POTENTIAL OF EASTERN EUROPEAN SOCCER

Left without state subsidies, the clubs of the former communist bloc have spent the past eight years scrambling for any scraps of cash they can pick up from the new capitalists who have sprung up in the emerging markets.

Few clubs have been able to generate enough revenue to prevent their players leaving in droves, attracted by the higher salaries of the West.

Few too, have been able to afford to undertake much-needed improvements to their crumbling stadiums and fewer still have been able to secure their long-term futures.

The recent purchase of Slavia Prague by English National Investments (ENIC) is an indication that east European clubs are turning to foreign capital to help them compete with their counterparts in the West.

ENIC will bring in their own managers to work alongside the existing Slavia management team and while this is the first time a western company has taken a majority ownership in an east European club there has been growing foreign interest in a number of teams.

FAREWELL MATCH FOR AC MILAN'S BARESI

Former team mates and rivals reunited at San Siro stadium for the farewell match of AC Milan's charismatic captain Franco Baresi.

Baresi, who retired this year to become vice president of the Milan club owned by media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, led the traditional red-and-black team to a 5-1 victory against an "All Stars" line-up.

FRANCO BARESI

About 55,000 fans, who dared a cold night to pay homage to the long-time captain of AC Milan and Italy's national team, granted Baresi a standing ovation when he left the field in the 85th minute.

Baresi's team included Ruud Gullit, Marco Van Basten, Frank Rijkaard and other players who earned AC Milan a series of national and international titles in the late 1980s and early 90s.

Van Basten, one of the great strikers who was forced to retire following an ankle injury, played 28 minutes before being replaced by another Golden Ball prize winner, Liberian George Weah, a current AC Milan forward.

Weah scored two goals for AC Milan. Baresi tallied one. Gianluigi Lentini and Roberto Baggio, second-half starters, added two goals.

Hierro, formerly of Real Madrid, scored the only goal for the 'All Stars', which included Brazilians Careca, Zico and Romario, Mexican Hugo Sanchez and Chelsea's Italian striker Gianluca Vialli.

GEORGE WEAH

Baresi, played 470 league games with AC Milan, and retired with a record of 81 national team caps, six league titles, three European Champions Cups, two Intercontinental Cups and three European Super Cups as well as the 1982 World Cup.

SOUNESS TO BE NEW BOSS OF BENFICA

Portugal's Benfica have elected lawyer Joao Vale e Azevedo as president with the task of ending one of the worst crises in the history of the illustrious soccer club.

Vale e Azevedo's first move will be to name ex-Liverpool and Rangers manager Graeme Souness as coach of the former European champions from Lisbon, who have got off to a disastrous start this season and are currently languishing in the middle of the Portuguese first division, and were also dumped out of the UEFA Cup by French side Bastia in the opening round.

RENQUIN NEW COACH OF NICE

Former Belgian international Michel Renquin has taken over as coach of French second division Nice with Silvester Takac promoted to technical director.

Renquin, whose new side are away to Slavia Prague in the second leg of their European Cup Winners' Cup second round this week, was previously coach of Switzerland's under-21 team.

CHILEAN PLAYERS THREATEN STRIKE

Chilean soccer players said they would go back on strike.

Union leader Carlos Ramos, angry after a second division club fired their entire squad, accused some clubs of going back on the agreement which ended the first strike last month.

Ramos said some clubs had fined or sacked players for taking part in September's two-week strike, called in protest at what the union said were dismal working conditions.

Chile are poised to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1982. They will almost certainly claim their place if they beat Bolivia at home this month, although a new strike could disrupt the national team's preparations for the game.

CAMPO'NSE APPOINT NEW COACH

Struggling Portuguese outfit Campomaiorense have appointed Joao Alves as coach to replace Bernardino Pedroto, sacked 24 hours earlier following poor results which left the club second-from-bottom in the league.

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PERTH GLORY

REAR: L-R: Vinko Buljubasic, Danny Hay, Paul Strudwick, Gavin Wilkinson, Samson Siasia, Tommy Maras.
FRONT: L-R: Bobby Despotovski, Scott Miller, Ernie Tapai, Anthony Carbone, Gareth Naven (Captain).

Photograph: Sports West Media